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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Collaborative practice to support young people with ASN during the school to post-school transition in Scotland (The perspectives of young people, their families and professionals)

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PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE IN EDUCATION

Collaborative practice to
support young people
with ASN during the
school to post-school
transition in Scotland

*(The perspectives of young people, their
families and professionals)*

Thomas Duncan Richardson

University of Dundee, December 2014

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Professional
Doctorate in Education

School of Education, Social Work and Community
Education, University of Dundee

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to individuals who helped, guided and supported me in completing my doctoral study. My heartfelt thanks to both of my supervisors Professor Divya Jindal-Snape and Dr. Beth Hannah for their continuing support commitment, advice and guidance since the beginning of my studies at the University of Dundee. Thank you also to Dr. Murray Simpson and Dr. Ian Barron for the useful feedback during my Thesis Monitoring Committee meeting. Thank you to my family for their support and understanding throughout my years of study and to the Dick Bequest Trust, Edinburgh, for its financial support to me over the course of my studies and to my employers, a Scottish local authority, for granting me time to complete my studies in 2014.

Declaration

I hereby declare that the candidate, Thomas Duncan Richardson, is the author of the thesis presented herein; that, unless otherwise stated, all references cited have been consulted by the candidate; that the work of which the thesis is a record has been done by the candidate, and that it has not been previously accepted for a higher degree.

Signature: _____

All conditions stated within the Ordinances and Regulations of the University of Dundee have been strictly adhered to and fulfilled by the candidate, Thomas Richardson.

Supervisor's Signature: _____

Abstract

The school to post-school transition has been identified as a time when young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN) need extra support. This thesis focuses on the school to post-school transition planning and preparation process for young people with ASN in Scotland. In particular, the author scrutinised the collaborative planning and preparation that takes place amongst professionals to support young people with ASN and their families during this transition. The author also examined the influence of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 upon the process.

A mixed-methods research design was used to undertake three studies. Study 1 was a national on-line survey of professionals involved in post-school transition planning and preparation. Study 2 was a longitudinal study in which professionals involved in transition planning and preparations from one local authority were interviewed at 2 time periods (2004 before the implementation of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and 2010). Minutes of transition meetings from both periods were also examined. Study 3 was a case study of a further education college undertaken in the same local authority as Study 2, to understand the experiences of transition planning and preparation from the perspectives of the young people with ASN who had experienced post-school transition and their families, along with school and college professionals. Participants (young people, parents and professionals) were interviewed. Visual resources were developed by the author to support the interviews with the young people. Data in all the studies were analysed using a thematic analysis approach.

Finally, the findings of the three studies are presented and discussed. These include the perception that transition planning and preparation has become more young person centred since the Act was introduced. Implications for policy makers, practitioners, and future research are also discussed.

Chapter 1 Introduction

There are critical transitions in life when children and young people are most at risk of falling through the net and of losing the support and assistance they require...moving into further or higher education...leaving school...

(Former First Minister Jack McConnell at the Vulnerable and Excluded Children Conference in Edinburgh, November 18th 2003).

The author has developed a research interest in transitions over a number of years and so the focus of this thesis is collaboration and transitions in the context of the school to post-school transition for young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN). This interest partly derives from the author's professional roles as a strategic development officer and Teacher in a Scottish Local Authority (LA), and partly from the changing policy scenario in Scotland.

In Scotland, the rest of the United Kingdom (UK), and elsewhere in the world, professionals meet with young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN) and their families to discuss and plan the young person's transition from secondary school to post-school destinations like further and higher education or employment. In the UK, the roots of such collaborative planning lie a century or more in the past. For example, by the 1940s, a multi-professional approach to the needs of the child began to be adopted in the UK following developments in the

USA (DFES, 1978). In more recent times in Scotland, this collaborative planning and preparation has been defined by the Education Act of 1980 and the 'Future Needs Assessment' (FNA) system which was triggered for all young people with a 'Record of Needs' (RON). This required young people with SEN to be assessed and for a review of their future needs to be carried out beginning two years before they ceased to be of school age. The functions of the FNA included a consideration of the options for post-school provision, planning the final years of schooling and obtaining from the Social Work department an opinion on whether or not the pupil was a disabled person. The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (Scottish Executive 2004a, hereafter referred to as 'The Act') introduced the term 'ASN' and caused the FNA to become obsolete, although transition planning and preparation does still take place together with 'transition meetings' or 'review' meetings (HMIE, 2007).

Under the terms of the Act, co-ordinated Support Plans (CSPs) were introduced for some children. They are designed to apply to children who have ASN arising from (Code of Practice, 2004, p.9):

- "One or more complex factors
- Multiple factors
- Needs which are likely to continue for more than a year
- Needs which require significant additional support to be provided"

The Code then states that these children would be receiving 'significant additional support' from the education authority, and possibly from other agencies also, to be eligible to have a CSP. Importantly for this study, the Code also introduced changes to the school to post-school transition-planning process. These changes included the need for the transition process to be co-ordinated by a relevant person known to the young person and their family. This key worker might be, according to the Code, a Teacher, a Careers Adviser or a Social Worker, amongst others. It is perhaps important to state that the 'important' or 'key' person for the young person at the transition point may not be formally appointed into such a position. They might be a teaching or non-teaching member of staff in a school, or possibly a 'significant person', who might be a member of the young person's family (Jindal-Snape, 2012a).

The Code also states that the young person needs to be consulted about their wishes for the future. Also, the education authority is required to make contact with the post-school provision that the young person will be attending. In addition the authority is required to exchange information with other agencies no later than 12 months before the date a young person with additional support needs is expected to cease receiving school education.

Although few children and young people have a CSP compared to those who had a RON under the previous arrangements (cf HMIE,

2007), the current transition meetings take place for a wider population of children who have continuing ASN, rather than for just those children and young people who have a CSP.

It is worth noting, however, that the 'Code' does not actually specify that there should be a meeting in any formal sense, in a school or anywhere else. Figure 1 illustrates the changes in the transition meeting system in Scotland:

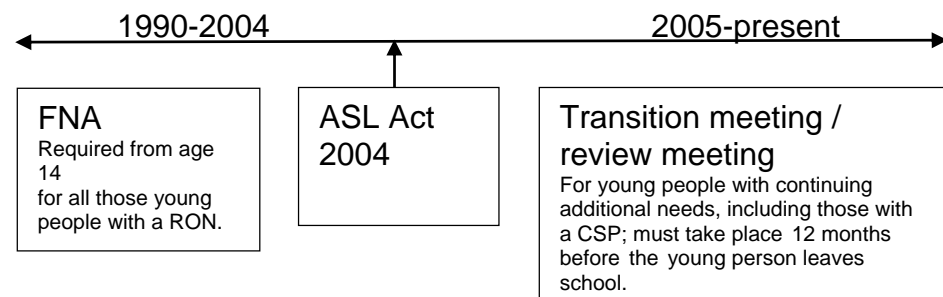


Figure 1: Changes to Scottish school to post-school transition meetings.

As a result of the author's interest in the post-school transition process, he designed a study in which he examined how the post-school planning 'system' has evolved in Scotland as a result of changes brought about by the Act. The thesis as a whole aims to highlight the experience of transition preparation and planning from the perspectives of professionals, young people and parents / carers. The study examines whether the Act has influenced this process, and if so, how. Three research questions form the basis of this study:

1. What is the perception of the influence of changing legislation on post-school transition planning and preparation in Scotland in the context of inter-professional working and the participation of young people in the process?
2. What are the perspectives of the professionals who are involved in multi-agency transition meetings about the legislative changes and its impact on practice?
3. What are the experiences of young people with ASN and their families (and of the professionals who work with them) of post-school transition planning and preparation?

The 3 research questions above led to the formulation of 4 Research Objectives, as follows:

- 1 Explore the views of professionals from different agencies and disciplines of transition planning and preparation across Scotland
- 2 Explore the views of professionals from different agencies and disciplines in one local authority in 2004 and in 2010 to understand the impact of change in legislation
- 3 Understand the impact of change in legislation by analysing the minutes of transition meetings held in one local authority between 2004 and 2010
- 4 Explore the views of young people with ASN who attend a college in one local authority about the young person's post-school transition experiences along with parents, school and college staff

Structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 is a literature review, which creates a background framework for the concepts of collaboration and transitions at the heart of this study. In the literature review, the concept of ASN is examined, both in terms of its historical development in the UK and elsewhere, and also in terms of the contemporary picture. In the review there is a focus on legislation in Scotland: in particular, there is a consideration of the requirements of legislation in relation to post-school transition planning prior to and since the introduction of the ASL Act of 2004. The review also considers the critical role that collaboration plays in the transition planning and preparation process. Following the review there is a section in which the author develops a methodological stance within which to frame the study.

Chapter 3 provides details of the methodology employed as well as how the studies were designed and conducted. Profiles of the participants in the studies are included, as well as details of the process by which the author adopted a particular methodological stance for the studies (post-positivism and insider ethnography) and a particular method of data analysis (thematic analysis). An overview of the ethical process undertaken for all the studies in this thesis is also given.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology employed and reports upon and discusses the findings from Study 1 (a national survey of professionals' views of the post-school transition planning process). The details of the ethical procedures undertaken for Study 1 are also included.

Chapter 5 provides an overview of the methodology employed, and reports upon and discusses the findings from Study 2. Study 2 is a longitudinal study encompassing data from interviews with professionals in 2004 and 2010, and also data from the minutes of transition meetings. Professionals in one Scottish LA were interviewed. All of these professionals were involved in transition planning and meetings for young people during the school to post-school transition. These professionals were interviewed both prior to and following the introduction of the Act. Further data were gathered from minutes of transition meetings dating from before and after the introduction of the Act. The details of the ethical procedures undertaken for Study 2 are also included.

Chapter 6 gives details of the methodology used, and reports upon and discusses the findings from Study 3. Study 3 is a 'case study' of a further education college. The study includes the results of interviews with students with ASN, college staff and parents as well as some school staff from the schools from which the young people came. The purpose behind these interviews was to try to gain an understanding

of the views and experiences of transition for the young people with ASN and to try to understand what, if any, effects the introduction of new legislation has had on these experiences. In the case of the young people, a visual 'discussion poster' resource, designed by the author, was also used. The details of the ethical procedures undertaken for Study 3 are also included.

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis with a general discussion of the results of all 3 studies and an overall conclusion. The chapter also includes a reflection upon the process of conducting the research, some of the limitations of the study and implications for future researchers and policy-makers arising from it.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to help set the scene for the author's study by defining some of the key concepts that arise in it. These include ASN, transitions, collaborative practice and the use of visual resources to support the participation of young people in education. The review includes a consideration of the historical and legislative framework underpinning transition meetings and planning, including how other researchers have examined them in the past (Hart, 1998). To do so, the author uses Hart's 3 key '*knowledge-based elements*' (1998, p.174), namely:

- *"Identifying previous research on the topic,*
- *considering how definitions were developed, and*
- *identifying what other researchers have considered important"*

The author will discuss 4 topics, namely:

- 'Additional Support Needs' (ASN)
- Transitions, especially educational transitions
- Collaborative practice
- The use of visual resources to support the participation of young people in education

The first section of this literature review concerns ASN. The author considers what the term means and how the concept of ASN has evolved in Scotland. The author also considers comparable terms in use elsewhere in the world, with some linkage to Scottish, United Kingdom (UK) and US legislation.

The next section of the review examines transitions as a concept, with a focus upon educational transitions for young people with ASN at the school to post-school stage. The review refers to research and policy in Scotland and the UK, together with research from elsewhere in the world.

The third section of the literature review examines collaborative working. Collaborative working is seen as a fundamental component of additional needs education. In education, and possibly in other services for children, professionals need to collaborate more at transition times (Mittler, 2007).

The fourth section of the literature review examines literature relating to the use of visual resources to engage and/or support young people. This underpins the author's approach to the student interviews using visual resources that underpin the 'college case study' described later in this thesis (Study 3, Chapter 6).

The final sections of the literature review examine the theoretical background to conducting research with children and young people as well as considering some theories of child development. Finally the literature review suggests some gaps in the research which led to the author's study.

2.1 Literature Review search strategy

In the literature review the author has considered research from around the world as well as research relating to the United Kingdom and to Scotland in particular. The author wished to gain an initial impression of some of the key issues relating to ASN, transitions, collaboration and visual resources, especially where they apply to children / young people. The literature searches were then narrowed down to the UK and Scotland in order to try to make the review as relevant as possible to this study.

The author particularly sought studies relating to the experiences of professionals, young people (including those with ASN) and families of school to post-school transition planning and preparation in Scotland, the UK and elsewhere in the world. Table 2.1 summarises the search terms used and the overall rate per database. Once the searches had been carried out in each case, the responses from each were then scrutinized and potentially useful documents were either downloaded or requested from library stores. Other documents were

obtained by writing to authors directly or were photocopied from University libraries by the author.

Table 2.1: Databases searched and hit rate

Search terms used	Hit rate: ERIC database	Hit rate: University of Dundee 'Cross Search' (Education & Social Work)	Hit rate: University of Dundee 'Cross Search' (Psychology)
<i>'History of Special Educational Needs [in the] UK'</i>	1601	48	13
<i>'History of Additional Support Needs [in the] UK'</i>	1601	27	9
<i>'Post school transition planning [for] young people [with] Special Educational Needs'</i>	1839	35	9
<i>'Post school transition planning [for] young people [with] Additional Support Needs'</i>	1844	35	11
<i>'Post school transition planning [and] collaborative working'</i>	3	43	0
<i>'Post school transition planning [and] inter-agency working'</i>	2	24	0
<i>'Using visual resources [to] support young people [with] Special Educational Needs'</i>	905	16	26
<i>'Using visual resources [to] support young people [with] Additional Support Needs'</i>	711	10	27

The criteria for inclusion were that the studies needed to relate to school to post-school transition planning and they needed to date from between 2000 and 2014. There were a few exceptions. One was the

Warnock Report of 1978. The author felt that this document remained relevant to his study despite its age. Table 2.2 shows the number of documents examined by the author relating specifically to post school transitions planning:

Table 2.2– the number of studies linked to post-school transitions examined by the author

UK policy documents relating to the post-school transition	Research including Scotland – post school transitions	General research (including research relating to England, Wales & Northern Ireland) – post school transitions	International research – post school transitions
14	5	20	USA (7) Canada (3) Australia (1) Ireland (1)

In this review, the term ‘children’ is used for those aged less than 15 years of age. Thereafter, the term ‘young person’ has been used. ‘Collaboration’ is the main term used in the review to refer to different professionals working together. To develop a methodological framework for the study as a whole, searches were also carried out online to locate research relating specifically to social science research methodology and to ASN legislation in Scotland, the UK and elsewhere in the world.

2.2 Terminology: Additional Support Needs ('ASN')

ASN is the term used in Scotland to describe children and young people who require additional support to access the education system due to factors arising from a variety of 'needs'. It is important to state these factors may not be within the child. Rather they might be connected to environmental factors such as school or family circumstances.

The term ASN derives from Scottish legislation: the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 ('The Act'). Elsewhere in the United Kingdom, the term 'special educational needs' (SEN), formerly used in Scotland, is still in use. The author is interested in what these terms mean and how they fit into a historical context of 'special education' in this country and beyond.

ASN is a much broader concept than its predecessor, SEN, and the shift to ASN was quite a radical one. ASN, as previously stated, encompasses environmental factors located beyond the child like family circumstances as well as factors within the child (although still arguably influenced by external factors) like 'Autistic Spectrum Disorders' (ASD). Other examples of factors giving rise to 'needs' might include bereavement, a broken limb in plaster, or dyslexia. In other words, any difficulty which causes a short-term or long-term, significant barrier to participation in the life and learning of a school is

included under the definition. ASN can encompass a variety of 'normative' and 'non-normative' needs (Riddell, Stead, Weedon & Wright 2010). Riddell et al. cite blindness and deafness as examples of the former, and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) as examples of the latter. There is a strong association between the identification of ASN like SEBD and social deprivation, say the authors. It is important to state that where an expression like 'young people with ASN' is used in the author's studies which underpin this thesis, he is referring (mainly) to children and young people with a learning difficulty (LD) rather than any of the wider 'needs' like bereavement encompassed by the term 'ASN'.

In the USA, to take an example from outside the UK, the picture in terms of special education terminology has also evolved over the years. Terms that nowadays might cause an intake of breath, like the expression 'feeble-minded', were used in the American special school system from the early 20th century onwards. These terms have now fallen into abeyance (Osgood, 2010). From the mid-1970s, again in the USA, the term 'handicapped child' might be encountered, derived from the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. This term began to be replaced with the term 'child with a disability', following the introduction of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) from 1990 onwards (Bollmer, Cronin, Brauen, Howell, Fletcher, Gonin, & Jenkins, 2010). Another term, 'students with exceptionalities' may be encountered in the USA (Finn & Kohler, 2010). To take other examples from outside the UK, in both the USA and Canada, the term

'intellectual disability' (ID) is sometimes used (Trent-Krantz, 2009). In other countries, other terms may be encountered. In New Zealand, the term 'special education' relates to the education and support of children and young people with ASN (www.minedu.govt.nz); in Australia, a similar term 'special needs education' may be encountered. This term encompasses children with physical or intellectual disabilities, or health conditions (source: <http://australia.angloinfo.com>). Interestingly, given that different terms are clearly in use around the world to refer to what in Scotland is termed 'ASN', in France there is no equivalent term because there such terms have "*...particular references and connotations and [are] weighted with historical reference...*" (source: www.european.agency.org).

It is clear that in Scotland, and elsewhere in the world, a wide range of terms are in use to describe aspects of barriers to full participation in education. Rightly or wrongly, a range of acronyms and terms are used by professionals to describe aspects of ASN. It is perhaps difficult to say whether the children / young people and their parents / carers are happy for these terms to be used and if the use of the terms is positive and helpful. In the author's own professional life, many children / young people and many parents / carers are pleased when a 'difficulty' faced by a child is finally identified. Some might see this 'identification' as a route to greater support in school, for example. For some, there may have been years of uncertainty: there may have been an awareness that something was causing the child / young

person to have difficulties in school and possibly at home also. However, for a variety of reasons it might take the family, the school, or some other agency, time to identify just what the difficulty is. In addition, this process of 'identification' or 'assessment' is itself very contentious.

Later in this chapter, the author will talk further about the drive towards 'inclusion' in Scottish education, a process that is currently taking place elsewhere in the world also. In an educational context, 'inclusion' is concerned with reducing segregation in education and adapting the educational environment to fit the needs of the child or young person (in other words not locating the difficulty within the child or young person themselves). This environmental approach is now a strong focus within Teacher education in Scotland. For example, the author's own postgraduate training in recent years as a Teacher of ASN has involved action research to examine how this process of environmental adaptation (and also strategic support to Teachers) might work (Richardson, 2009). Rather than children being educated in some sort of specialist provision, the default position is that they are educated together. This 'default position' is backed by Scottish legislation, for example the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 states that only under specified exceptional circumstances should children be educated in anything other than an 'ordinary' school (i.e. not a 'special' school). It could, therefore, be argued that 'labelling' a child is at odds with the notion of inclusion (Villa and Thousand, 2005). If a child or young person is to be fully included in a

comprehensive education system as seems to be the aim of government, then perhaps such labelling is counter-productive.

The author wished to focus in this study upon a particular group of young people. They are young people who have been 'labelled' with an ASN. In the main, the young people who are the focus of this study could be said to have a 'learning difficulty' ('LD') rather than any of a range of other 'needs' like behavioural difficulties which would also be encompassed under the term 'ASN'. Clearly, therefore, labelling in some educational contexts still takes place. The professionals who work with these young people are required by legislation (the aforementioned Act) to collaborate in order to discuss the future needs of the young person prior to them leaving secondary school. This collaboration generally includes planning discussions and a meeting (or meetings) where the future destination(s) of the young people are discussed.

These meetings are one example of the collaboration between the professionals who currently work with the young person and also the professionals from adult services who will work with them once they leave school. Other types of contact and collaboration might also take place; there might be contact, for example, between children's and adult services when introductory visits to new settings are being undertaken by the young people; additionally, informal telephone contact might take place to arrange meetings and visits. Although the format and name of the actual meetings have changed over the last

few years, they remain meetings attended by different professionals from both children's and adult services, by the young people themselves and (usually) by their parents / carers.

One of the author's interests in this study was to consider just how such multi-agency meetings have come to be located within a school. As this review will show, although there have been multi-agency collaboration and multi-agency meetings in Scottish education for a number of decades, these did not always take place in the context of a school.

2.3 Educational Transitions

In this study, the author considers the term 'transition', what it means, and how people are affected by transitions as they move through the school system, or when they change from work into retirement, to give two examples. Using Hart's guidance mentioned previously, research work in this area was examined. Consideration was given to what Hart refers to as "*relevant vocabulary*" and "*alternative definitions of words and concepts*" (1998, p.174). In other words, the author began to consider what the term 'transition' means in a general sense, and to also consider meanings of the term in relation to the author's professional and research interests as a Teacher. This led the author to consider some educational transitions, for example the transition from primary school to secondary school. Examples of the many types of transition during a person's life might include:

- The transition from preschool to school
- Developmental transitions (e.g. pre-puberty to puberty / adolescence)
- Medical transitions (e.g. moving from a care setting like a hospital back into the community)

In the research literature, various definitions of 'educational transition' exist. For example, Fleischer (2010) talks about significant shifts that children / young people encounter before, during, and after their school experience, either on a daily basis (e.g. the transition between classes), or larger scale changes like moving from one school to another. Jindal-Snape (2010) refers to educational transitions as an ongoing process in which the child or young person moves from one context and set of relationships to another. Cross (2012) and Liu and Nguyen (2011) remind the reader that when considering transition experiences of young people, a complex interplay between genetics, biology, and social and emotional relationships at a time of rapid biological, psychological and physical change is taking place. Likewise, Dietrich, Parker and Salmela-Aro (2012) discuss how the challenges of the post-school transition depends on the individual, their social network, and wider societal, cultural, and institutional conditions.

For some children and young people, one or both factors may be weaker and the individual may struggle more at transition times. However, a successful educational transition might include students and pupils coming to terms with discontinuities and learning to cope

with them (Tobbell & O'Donnell 2005; Peters 2012).

There is a clear sense in the literature that an educational transition is a physical or experiential 'change' for the child / young person, to which they will adapt either well or poorly, depending on a variety of factors including their degree of 'resilience' (as Jindal-Snape & Foggie, 2008, put it) in the face of change. From the research he has read, the author is clear that an educational transition is a change (physical or otherwise) of circumstance for the child or young person set within (and influenced by) their social context. Periods of transition are important because they have been identified in research as being the times when some children and young people, including those with ASN, face uncertainty and apprehension (McLaughlin, Monteith and Sneddon, 2001). Why is it important to get transitions right? One reason might be that if one educational transition works poorly, later ones can be affected adversely (Dunlop, 2006).

In Scotland, policy initiatives like 'Curriculum for Excellence' (CfE) and 'Getting It Right For Every Child' (GIRFEC) are very prominent in Scottish education at present. These initiatives strongly advocate the idea of supporting children at all times, including at transition times. The Act itself also has a strong focus on transitions. Research from Scotland refers to some key educational transitions. For example, in terms of the pre-school to primary school transition, Stephen & Cope (2003) discuss how some young children find it difficult to fit into a new environment. Likewise, other researchers (e.g. Graham & Hill,

2003; Jindal-Snape, Douglas, Topping, Kerr & Smith, 2006; Evangelou, Taggart, Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons & Siraj-Blatchford, 2008) talk about the primary to secondary transition as an exciting time for many children / young people, although daunting for some, including those with ASN.

2.4 The school to post-school transition

One important educational transition is the school to post-school transition, where a young person moves to further or higher education, work, or some other setting from school. This is an “...*important developmental stage between adolescence and adulthood...*” say Kuehn, Pergamit, Macomber, and Vericker (2009, p.1), and a “...*dynamic and diverse period...*” in a person’s life (p.11). Young people with ASN who are making this transition from school to post-school are a particularly vulnerable group. They are cited frequently in policy and legislative documents in Scotland and elsewhere. The Beattie Report (Scottish Executive, 1999) noted that some young people, including those with ASN “...*are likely to be more vulnerable at the time of transition from secondary school...*” (Craig, 2009, p.41). The following sections examine the policy and research background which supports the need for proper planning and preparation at the school to post school stage. There is also a consideration of the historical background to collaborative planning in the UK.

2.4.1 Post school transition planning and preparation: the legislative and policy context

The Scottish Government summarises the requirements of legislation in their 2010 'Enquire' guide for parents in terms of the school to post-school transition. Firstly, in a general sense the guide makes it clear that education authorities in Scotland must help children with additional support needs to make the transition from school to adulthood. The guide then becomes more specific, stating that education authorities must (2010, p.69) *"...request and take into account information from other agencies that are likely to be involved in supporting your child after they leave school..."*.

The guide goes on to say that this must be done at least 12 months prior to the child leaving school. In the Scottish Government's 2008 report: *'Meeting the Needs for Longitudinal Data on Youth Transitions in Scotland – An Options Appraisal'*, there is a clear warning of the risks facing young people moving into the school to post-school transition phase with little in the way of qualifications. The report talks about poorly qualified young people being at risk of marginalisation in the labour market and in society. The report goes on to refer to the increased prominence over the last two decades of what was then termed 'young people not in education, employment or training' (NEET) as a key indicator of an unsuccessful post-school transition.

The acronym NEET has now been superseded by the term 'More Choices, More Chances' (Scottish Executive 2006). This document emphasises the need for "...*tracking and providing support* [for young people aged 16 to 19] *especially at transitions...*" (Mallinson, 2009, p.33). Many young people in Scotland receive support due to their ASN in the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) exam system. Despite this support, according to the report, many such young people are at risk of marginalisation due to low attainment in the current assessment system and, perhaps, adversely affected opportunities in adult life as a result. The report also mentions (cf Dunlop, 2006) that this transition may be affected adversely by poor experiences in earlier transitions, for example primary to secondary. On a more positive note, the report goes on to refer to the increasing numbers of young people who stay on at school for a 5th year in the 2000s, compared to previous decades. The report also indicates that further and higher education has become more diverse and much more widely available to young Scots over the last few years. The policy background in Scotland, according to the report, reflects the aims of the Scottish Government to make learning for young people more flexible, accessible and available, as far as possible, to all. The report cites a range of policy documents containing these aims. These include:

- Determined To Succeed (Scottish Executive, 2002)
- A Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Executive, 2004b)
- Ambitious Excellent Schools (Scottish Executive, 2004c)
- More Choices, More Chances (Scottish Executive, 2006)

Importantly, the report sees the aim of government in this regard as being to improve the odds for young people not just in terms of formal attainment, but also with regards to broader employability skills. The Act refers directly to transitional planning. The Act states that transition planning should still take place, but that it should be more streamlined and flexible and less likely to involve large, formal meetings as before. The 'Enquire' guide and the 'Youth Transition' report mentioned above raise some concerns about the post-school experiences of some young people with ASN in Scotland.

Other Scottish documents flag up the school to post-school transition as a point where all young people, and particularly those with ASN, require greater support. For example, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) highlighted the need for improvements in transition support in their 'Count Us In: We're Still Here' report of 2008 and the Doran Review (2012) made reference to the need to (p.30) *"...consider the adequacy of existing legislation to ensure that the transition from children's to adult services for young people with complex additional support needs is properly coordinated, managed and delivered..."*, adding that *"...stakeholders consistently express*

concern in relation to practice in transitions across children and young people's learning experiences, but particularly in relation to post-school transition...".

Other recent Scottish publications that highlight the school to post-school transition and a need for improvements in the effectiveness of coordinated support for young people at this point include:

- 16+ Learning Choices: Policy and Practice Framework (2010)
- Opportunities for All: Supporting all young people to participate in post-16 learning, training or work (2012)
- Children in Scotland: Scotland's Children's Sector Forum and the Scottish Transitions Forum (Summary Report, 2014)

These concerns are echoed in research from the US. In a literature review of studies and programmes designed to improve student's preparation for post-secondary pathways in the context of the American High School system, Bangser (2008, p.5) sees the post-school transition as a 'risk point' for *"...students with disabilities... [who find] ...transitions from high school to post-secondary education and employment... particularly challenging..."*

2.4.1.1 Collaborative meetings for children and young people with ASN: the historical framework

There seems on balance to be evidence in the literature that of all the transitions for children / young people with ASN, the school to post-

school transition is a particularly challenging and difficult one (Pilnick, Clegg, Murphy & Almack, 2010). This is a time, say the authors, when young people with, as they put it, 'intellectual disability' ('ID') leave the support of children's services and negotiate a new package of support from adult services. In addition, Carnaby, Lewis, Martin, Naylor and Stewart (2003) describe it as a 'critical period' and Cullen, Lyndsay and Dockrell (2009) see this transition as a 'major landmark' for young people with ASN.

As a researcher into ASN education and professional collaboration, the author is keen to 'shine a light' on collaboration at this particular transition point at a time of change within Scottish education, namely the implementation of the Act in 2005. Institutions and certain ways of working have developed in Scotland over time. Legislation and policy development have shaped these institutional structures and ways of working. Within these institutions adults discuss the needs of children, at various ages and stages, internally and externally, with adults from other agencies, and with parents.

The author's examination of the development of special needs education in this country and elsewhere provided clues about the origins of the inter-agency collaboration at the heart of his study. For example, the review placed the current arrangements for transition planning in Scotland within a continuum of developments of terminology and social attitudes to people with ASN. From the 'institutions' of the last two centuries to a growing awareness of

environmental influences upon a person's ASN, it is possible to summarise some of these historical developments, and to consider how professionals began to collaborate together in order to support children and young people with ASN. In other words, why did professionals working in the field of ASN begin to collaborate and why do they do so today? The requirements of legislation may provide part of the answer, but, as will become clear, the search for answers to complex questions about children's needs may also be part of the story.

Educational provision for children with special educational needs, now ASN, has existed in Great Britain in some form and for specific groups of individuals in particular places since the mid-18th century. At that time, there were specialised schools for the blind, the deaf, and the mentally and physically handicapped. Over the course of the 19th century, the notion of the 'normal' child seems to have emerged from the gathering of social data by Teachers, Doctors and others. Specialised schools were seen as a means of social control for those who were not seen as 'normal', segregating those who were seen as unable to learn or behave from those who were seen as able to do so (Myers & Brown, 2005).

From the late 19th century, attempts were made to provide elementary education to all children, and, with the advent of the Education (Scotland) Act 1872, some blind and deaf children began to be taught in ordinary secondary schools along with sighted and hearing children,

often in centres attached to the schools. For physically and mentally handicapped children, as they were then known, the end of the 19th century saw the inception of some special schools and classes in London, Leicester and elsewhere in the country (cf DFES, 1978).

Following the Royal Commission on the Blind and Deaf (1896), which made recommendations about the education of blind and deaf children, legislation in Scotland followed in the form of the Education of Blind and Deaf Mute Children (Scotland) Act 1890.

In terms of mentally handicapped children (who we might term as having learning disabilities today), the late 19th century saw many of these children entering public elementary schools. Importantly, according to Warnock, there were no systematic ways of assessing their individual 'capabilities and requirements' at this time. This is interesting in terms of beginning to consider how collaboration in ASN developed over time. It is perhaps possible to determine when assessment meetings for children and young people with ASN began to appear.

There are clues in other research. For example, Myers and Brown (2005), cited earlier, note that from the beginning of the 20th century until the 1970s, records do exist relating to special schools in Birmingham which show that Teachers, Doctors, Psychologists and others were examining and testing children at these special schools. These records begin to show the shadowy beginnings of assessment

of need and even some records of subsequent life experiences.

It seems, then, that at this point in this very brief history of educational provision for children with ASN in Scotland / the UK, some meetings involving (perhaps) different professionals may have been taking place at certain times and in certain places in 20th century Britain. It seems important to mention the terminology in use here, as terminology is an issue that is discussed more than once in this study. The terminology of the late 19th century and throughout the 20th century, used to discuss these children, would be unacceptable for us today, like those above. For example, terms like 'imbecile' and 'feeble-minded' were then used to describe different levels of what we might today term 'learning disability', and which today would be insulting terms (Read & Walmsley, 2006).

In the first half of the 20th century, a succession of further Education Acts (the Education Act 1902, the Elementary Education (Defective and Epileptic Children) Act 1914, and the Education Act 1918) all helped to shape the further development of special education in Britain. Similarly, in America, in the early years of the 20th century, the first 'special schools', or schools for the 'feeble-minded', again using the language of the time, begin to be seen (cf Osgood, 2010).

2.4.1.2 Collaborative assessment of children and young people with ASN

Referring back to Warnock, in terms of educational developments in Scotland, two Acts relate to the development of special education in the early part of the 20th century. The first, the Education of Defective Children (Scotland) Act 1906 allowed school boards to make provision in special schools or classes in order to educate, to use the words of the Report, 'defective' children between the ages of 5 and 16. A subsequent Act, the Mental Deficiency (Scotland) Act 1913 is, again, relevant to the author's interest in the historical development of meeting structures. This act required school boards to *"...ascertain children in their area who were defective, and those who were considered incapable of benefiting from instruction in special schools became the responsibility of parish councils for placement in an institution..."* (cf DFES, 1978, p.15).

The use of language like 'defective', and 'placement in an institution' have become, of course, unacceptable. These terms seem to equate with children who would today be described as having complex needs. In those days these children would, after some sort of assessment had determined that they were, 'incapable of benefiting from instruction in special schools', be placed in an 'institution' (whatever that word meant in the context of the time) presumably for the rest of their lives. However, although children with complex needs like these

are no longer treated in this way in the so-called 'developed' world, placement in an 'appalling institution' is still the fate of tens of thousands of disabled children in the developing world even today (Mittler, 2008).

It is perhaps important to say that much of the history of special education is drawn from records kept by the professionals themselves. The voices of the recipients of that education, the children themselves, are largely silent (cf Read & Walmsley, 2006). However, change is a constant in education, as it is in many other walks of life. Arguably, it is not only terminology that has changed significantly over the decades and centuries. In Scotland and the UK, the debate over the future of ASN certainly continues with, for example, the ongoing development of the 'self-advocacy movement' (cf Mittler, 2008), where young people with ASN find ways to speak out to become the agents of their own futures. Here in the so-called 'developed' world, progress and improvement in the lives of children and young people with disabilities may be seen. However, despite this progression, the quality of life for disabled adults and their families is still far below that of the rest of the population (cf Mittler, 2008).

The quote from the Warnock Report is important to the author in that it uses the verb '*ascertain*'. This implies that the 1913 Mental Deficiency and Lunacy (Scotland) Act would require school boards in Scotland to use some sort of assessment to determine the level of a child's 'defectiveness'. What sort of assessment(s) might have been in use at

that time? According to Read and Walmsley (cf 2006), one assessment introduced in the early years of the 20th century was the Stanford-Binet test used to measure 'intelligence quotient' or 'IQ'.

It seems that nearly a century ago in Scotland individuals within the Scottish education system were discussing children with 'additional needs', assessing them, and making broad decisions about their future (at least in terms of whether they should go to a special school or an 'institution'). Further developments in terms of the education of children with ASN followed. In 1929, the Wood committee recommended that 'mentally defective children', as they put it, rather than being separated from mainstream education as before, should become more closely part of it.

Developments in educational provision for blind and deaf children also took place throughout the first half of the 20th century, and, by the mid-century, there was some provision for 'maladjusted' children, in other words those who exhibited behavioural difficulties. The first half of the twentieth century in Britain, however, while an improvement upon the neglectful treatment of children with special needs which preceded it, was still characterised by segregation, control and manual training (cf Read & Walmsley, 2006). While 'maladjustment' was not officially recognised as requiring special education prior to the Second World War, nevertheless this was an area where, following developments in America, the idea of adopting a 'multi-professional' approach to the needs of the child began to be seen in Britain.

The historical narrative continues with the Second World War, which marked a turning point for society as a whole in Britain. Physical reconstruction of bomb-damaged cities, for example, marked a fresh start for many communities. The area of special education, too, evolved at this time. In Scotland, the Education (Scotland) Act 1945 was the key piece of legislation, which drove reform in this period. The provision of special education for children was now to be seen as part of the overall provision for primary and secondary education, and children with ASN might be educated in ordinary schools, or in special schools, depending on their needs. Interestingly while these changes were taking place in the UK, in the US legislation was forcing schools to de-segregate in terms of race. This legislation was used to begin to push for full inclusion of children with disabilities in US education in the decades following the Second World War. The main recent legislation in the US, which aims to drive the inclusion agenda for children with disabilities, is the aforementioned IDEA Act of 1990 and its 1997 Amendment (Nolan, 2004; Bollmer et al. 2010).

To return to the Warnock Report and to Scotland, as distinct from the rest of the UK, the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 led to the provision of 'child guidance services'. The function of this was to study handicapped, backward and difficult children in order to advise Teachers and parents as to the appropriate methods of education and training for these children, and in suitable cases to provide special educational treatment in child guidance clinics.

This helped to lay the foundations for the assessment of children by Educational Psychologists, a body who were regularly involved in the former Future Needs Assessment (FNA) meeting system, now 'transition meetings'. Categories and definitions of children with 'additional needs' continued to evolve after the war: children with 'maladjustment' have already been mentioned; those with 'speech defects' were a new category which arose at around this time. The concept of 'educationally sub-normal' (ESN) children arose at around this time also. They were seen as children of limited ability and also children 'retarded', as the report puts it, by 'other conditions' (cf DFES, 1978).

Following the war, the numbers of special schools increased due to the increasing post-war birth-rate and the consequent increase in the number of children with 'additional needs'. In terms of post-war multi-agency meetings to consider children with 'additional needs', there were examples of this sort of meeting. In the 1950s, for example, so-called maladjusted children could be helped by multi-agency teams consisting of a child psychiatrist, and Educational Psychologist, and a Psychiatric Social Worker, who all worked closely with special school staff (cf DFES, 1978). It is useful to take note of this early example of multi-agency collaboration in terms of the author's own interest in collaboration in more recent years. Hospital special schools also developed after the war, and an important point about them is raised which relates to this study: The successful education of the children in

these schools depended upon close and continuous co-operation between hospital and teaching staff' (cf DFES, 1978).

Here is another implied setting for multi-agency meetings concerning children with 'additional needs' ('hospital special schools'), but, crucially, they are no longer necessarily 'located' within an educational institution, but rather a medical one with an educational component. It is perhaps also not necessarily the case that the educational needs of the child are paramount, as they might be in an educational setting. The child, if he or she has been placed in such a setting, would presumably have medical needs also. In Scotland, by the 1950s, reports were already suggesting that, as medical knowledge increased and as general school conditions improved, it should be possible for an increasing number of pupils who require special educational treatment to be educated along with their contemporaries in ordinary schools (cf DFES, 1978).

From the 1950s to the 1970s, there continued to be developments that relate to the consideration of multi-agency collaboration and meetings. It was recommended, for example, that every education authority should develop a child guidance service consisting of Educational Psychologists, the school health service and child guidance clinics, all of whom should co-operate closely together (cf DFES, 1978). These developments in Scotland arose from the Education (Scotland) Act 1969, and the Act that created Social Work departments: the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. Thus, the 20 year

period from 1950 to 1970 seems to be the point where some of the multi-agency collaboration which had occurred in medical settings previously began to shift to educational settings.

2.4.1.3 Discussion

The author has attempted to clarify how a point has been reached, in the second decade of the 21st century, where, in Scotland, inter-agency professional collaboration, including planning meetings, occurs within the education system. These meetings are held in both 'mainstream' and 'special' schools. Meetings are held to discuss the future support provision for children / young adults with ASN in the last year or two before they leave school, although other multi-agency meetings may be held for them at other stages in their school-careers.

In historical terms it is possible to summarise the development of this collaboration (Table 2.3):

Table 2.3: Historical development of collaborative meetings (based upon DFES, 1978; Nolan, 2004; Myers and Brown, 2005; Read and Walmsley, 2006; Bollmer et al. 2010).

Chronology and documentary evidence	Key Events
Mental Deficiency (Scotland) Act 1913	School boards meeting to 'ascertain' the level of a child's 'needs'
1929, the Wood committee	'Mentally defective' children becoming more closely part of 'mainstream' education but still some segregation.
1940s	'Multi-professional' approach to the needs of the child begins to be adopted in UK following developments in America
Education (Scotland) Act 1945	The provision of 'child guidance services'
Post 1940s	Co-operation between hospital and teaching staff in hospital special schools
1950s	'Maladjusted' children could be helped by multi-agency teams.
1950s onwards	Early suggestions that most children with 'additional needs' in Scotland should begin to be educated in mainstream schools. Drive towards inclusion elsewhere also (e.g. USA).

It could be said that, while planning meetings for children with ASN have been 'located' more-or-less in the Scottish education system for nearly a century, some form of educational provision specifically for some children with ASN existed in Scotland for more than a century before that. In addition, other developments, shaped by legislation and social changes, have influenced the development of this form of education, and therefore the meetings themselves.

It seems that, at least from the 1940s, education in the UK has increasingly adopted a 'co-operative approach' in the area of ASN. There is a clear 'drawing together' of 'special' education and 'mainstream' education. There is also a clear picture of children with certain needs being helped by a 'multi-agency' approach, both within the educational setting, and, sometimes, outside the educational setting (e.g. the medical setting in the case of hospital special schools) (cf DFES, 1978). There is also some indication of a historical 'precedent' for the location of the multi-agency meeting in the context of education, but also a clear indication that it might not always take place here. This points the way to discussions later in this study about where such multi-agency meetings *are* located, and where they arguably *should* be located, to best meet the needs of the child / young person concerned, and their families.

2.4.2 Format of current post-school transition meetings in Scotland

Having considered the historical background to collaborative planning to support children and young people in Scotland, the author then began to consider what the school to post-school transition 'looks like' at present in the Scottish education system. It seemed important to find out how and where professionals meet together with young people and families to support them in planning their futures. To attempt to clarify these points, the author began by examining references to transition meetings in documentation relating to the Act.

According to the Summary Handout on the Additional Support for Learning Act, 2nd edition, the Act aimed to provide better planning and better preparation for the transition to post-school life.

As part of this process, according to this document, education authorities are required to request and take account of information and advice from other agencies that are likely to be involved in supporting the young person at least 12 months prior to the young person's school leaving date. In addition, the authorities must provide information to those agencies that will have responsibility for supporting the young person once they leave school. The Handout gives Further Education (FE) colleges as an example. This must be done at least 6 months before the young person leaves school to allow preparation and planning together with other agencies to provide a continuum of support.

Importantly, the Act itself does not specify how this preparation and planning should be done. Nor does the Act seem to specify, as mentioned earlier, that any meeting should take place in a school. Research relating to the former FNA meetings in Scotland and so-called 'Ed-Voc' meetings in Canada (Tisdall, 1996) also questions whether such meetings should take place in a school. The latter were held in community centres and other settings.

The Act also recommends a 'key person' to guide the young person through the transition process, a recommendation echoed in much

other research (cf Bellis, 2003; Ward et al. 2003; Mittler, 2007; Bangser, 2008). In addition, the Act requires collaboration between education and other agencies at this transition point. However, as previously stated, while collaboration is strongly advocated between education and other professions in the UK and elsewhere (cf Bagley et al. 2004; Mittler, 2007), successful collaboration is difficult to attain (cf Minore & Boone, 2002; Griffin, 2010). However, as stated, this collaboration does not necessarily need to be in the form of a formal meeting, nor does it necessarily need to take place in a school as Tisdall's research suggests. The Tisdall study seems to suggest that in some ways at least it may be more beneficial not to be in a school, in that, for example, young people and their families may feel more comfortable in a 'non-school' setting.

It seems to be left to education authorities and individual schools in Scotland to decide how professional collaboration, including meetings, should occur at the school to post-school point. Modern transition meetings aim to be, according to documents published to explain the Act, more person-centred, providing a 'continuum of support' with greater consideration of the young person's interests (Summary Handout on the Additional Support for Learning Act, 2nd edition).

2.4.2.1 Examples of post-school transition meetings in different parts of Scotland

By examining a small, random selection of documents published online by local authorities, it is possible to gain a rough impression of collaboration and transition meetings elsewhere in Scotland. In Perth and Kinross, a Scottish local authority, 'enhanced transition planning' is undertaken at an 'additional support meeting' (Perth and Kinross Council – Post-School Transitions Guidelines, 2007). These meetings take place in school and involve a range of professionals plus the young person and their parents / carers, according to the guidelines. No further detail concerning these meetings is included.

In West Dunbartonshire, also a Scottish local authority, the Educational Psychology service has produced a summary of a project exploring the primary to secondary transition for pupils with social/communication difficulties such as autistic spectrum disorders ('ASD'). Here, the term 'transition review meeting' is used (West Dunbartonshire Council Educational Psychology Service, 2005). In these guidelines, there is, again, a suggestion about some positive features of transition planning. Examples include:

- Involvement of parents
- Identification of a transition key worker
- Information-sharing
- Involvement of the children in the process

The website of Education Scotland also refers to transition planning, although without referring to 'meetings' as such. Rather, the video presentation, by Alan Haughey, National Development Officer - Post School Transitions, refers to the need for early planning of post-school transitions, involving the appropriate professionals (or representatives of the voluntary sector), the young person and their family.

Despite this very small sample (there are 32 local authorities in total in Scotland), it is perhaps possible to say that there seems to be variation across Scotland with regards to the title and format of current transition meetings.

2.4.2.2 Research into post-school transition planning in research literature

There is recent research relating to school to post-school transition planning for young people with ASN in the UK and Scotland. Abbott and Heslop (2009), for example, highlight the vulnerability of young people with learning difficulties who go to residential special schools and colleges in the UK, often living a long way from home. The

findings of their research emphasise the importance of continuity to young people, the need for more creativity in minimising the effects of distance, and the crucial nature of good forward planning in order to help young people transition successfully to post-school settings. Transition towards adulthood (from school to college, or college and beyond), they say, requires careful planning and support for both young people and their families. In addition, the support of families, friends and professionals including Teachers are an important factor in supporting young people's welfare, including at transition times (Carroll, 2013).

Research by Canduela, Chandler, Elliott, Lindsay, Macpherson, McQuaid and Raeside (2010) explores the transition to post-school of early school leavers in Scotland: such young people attend college while formally remaining the responsibility of their school. The authors say that the most disadvantaged young people are the least likely to progress. The article concludes by identifying lessons for good practice in school-college partnership-working.

2.4.2.3 Discussion

From the author's examination of the Scottish Government's legislative requirements regarding transition planning, it is clear that communication with the agencies who will be involved with the young person once they have left school should take place in their last year of school. The guidance, which is echoed in the documents provided

by local authorities, suggests that a 'key worker' can support the process and that the young person and their families should be fully involved in the process. However, the guidance does not state that the planning and support should necessarily take place in a school.

2.4.3 Stakeholder's views of transition planning and preparation

The following sections provide a sense of sense of how young people, their families and the professionals who work with them 'see' transition planning from their perspectives.

2.4.3.1 Views of young people and parents / carers of transition planning and preparation

"Research has shown that the experience of transition remains a deeply problematic one for young people and carers..." (cf Kaehne and Beyer, 2008, p.4)

In addition to the research from the UK and elsewhere relating to the views of professionals of transitions, research literature exists relating to how young people themselves see the transition from school to post-school (cf McLaughlin et al. 2001; Ward et al. 2003; Tarleton & Ward, 2005; Mittler, 2007). Much of this literature shows:

- A considerable gulf between the pronouncements of policy and the actual experiences of the young people at transition
- Many young people did not have a transition plan. In the study by Ward et al. (2003), referred to above, 272 questionnaires were completed by families of young people with 'learning disabilities', as the study puts it, between the ages of 13 and 24 in different parts of England. Only 1 in 5 of those young people in the study who had left school had had any sort of plan, as far as parents were aware
- Many young people had minimal involvement in their transition plans. 42% of those in the above study, for example, had had *"little if any involvement in process"*; a quarter of them had not been involved at all
- Much transition planning took little account of the views of the young people themselves
- The transition plans often had little effect on the outcome for the young people
- The topics which parents/carers and young people wished to be covered in planning meetings differed from those actually covered
- Many disabled young people found it difficult to obtain meaningful employment post-school – many found themselves continuing with training or in menial jobs contrary to their wishes. For example Mittler (cf 2007) refers to a large scale longitudinal study of 2000 school-leavers with cognitive and learning difficulties who were found to be neither in education nor employment or in low level jobs with few prospects

Other studies in which the views of young people with ASN are sampled include the following:

Eddy (2010) carried out research into IEP (Individualized Education Program) / transition planning. The results of this research carried out suggest that participating in such planning does have a positive relationship with the perceived self-determination of college students

with disabilities. Along similar lines, Woods, Sylvester and Martin (2010) looked at 'Student-Directed Transition Planning' lessons to provide a means to increase self-determination skills and student participation in transition IEP meeting discussions.

Carroll and Dockrell (2012) looked at a particular ASN. They examined the post-16 outcomes for young adults with a specific language impairment (SLI). In the research, the majority of the young people saw themselves and their parents and families as key agents of change and very active participants in steering their own transition since leaving school. Wilson, Bialk, Freeze, Freeze and Lutfiyya (2012) also remind the reader that creating a successful transition to a meaningful and valued life for individuals with learning disabilities requires the sustained, diligent and coordinated efforts of family members, supporters, educators and the individuals themselves. In their article, the formative childhood and adolescent experiences of two young people with learning disabilities are chronicled, with the young people as co-authors, leading to their transitions from secondary school to university.

The work of Davies and Beamish (2009) is one of relatively few studies that have investigated transition programs and outcomes for young adults with disabilities as viewed from the perspective of the parent. This Australian study provided a voice for parents to report on the experiences of and outcomes for young adults following their recent transition from school into post-school life and concluded that

there was a lack of post-school options for the young adults since leaving school.

In research in Ireland by Gillan and Coughlan (2010), the authors conducted a study regarding parents' experiences of the transition of their child from special education to post-school mainstream services. Their results indicate that the transition process was generally experienced as stressful, uncertain, and problematic, particularly in terms of the bureaucracy involved in the process. The findings suggest that considerable gaps remain between policy and service provision regarding transition planning and post-school services for young adults with intellectual disabilities and their families, often posing barriers to successful transitions.

There does seem to be some evidence that, while the transition process retains many faults, some aspects of transitions are improving. For example, one group of researchers from the University of Edinburgh (Raffe, Croxford, Ianelli, Shapira & Howieson, 2006) discuss the findings of a research project concerning youth transitions in Scotland, England and Wales from 1984 to 2002. They found, for example, that while young people in the early 1980s felt that school had done little to prepare them for life after school, by the late 1990s many more felt that school had helped to prepare them for this change. The authors also found that over roughly the same timescale participation in post compulsory education increased dramatically. Of course, it is not possible to say whether this increase was due entirely

to improvements in transition planning or as a result of overall learning at school and wider changes to the education system (or economic changes whereby fewer jobs lead to more young people remaining in education).

Tarleton and Ward (cf 2005) also discuss a research project concerning the post-school transition from the point of view of the young people themselves and their parents or carers. The project concerned what information young people with ASN required in England and Wales at the school to post-school transition point. The information needs of the young people's families and their supporters were also considered in the project. There were three main areas of information the young people required:

- How to get a job
- How to get to college
- Information about the transition process generally

As the author indicated earlier, one recurring issue is the limited involvement of young people in planning their own future. Meetings are not explicitly mentioned in the Tarleton and Ward study. The study does state, however, that there is a requirement for the young people to be involved in transition planning in English legislation (Education Act and associated Codes of Practice, 1993; 2001). The same is true in Scotland (ASL Code of Practice Chapter 5). This requirement also exists in US legislation for children, young people and adults: The

aforementioned Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997 and the Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1992 (Test, Mason, Hughes, Konrad, Neale & Wood, 2004).

The aforementioned Tarleton and Ward study is particularly useful and relevant, in the author's view, in that the research topics were devised by the young people themselves (they were the researchers in the project). If the ideal form of transition planning fully involves the young person, as legislation requires, then research driven by the young people themselves and reflecting their interests and goals must surely be a positive step.

In a study co-authored by Linda Ward (cf Ward et al. 2003), cited earlier, information was gathered from the families of young people with learning disabilities in England using a postal questionnaire. Like the Tarleton and Ward study mentioned earlier, the lack of transition planning for some young people with ASN was highlighted, as was the limited involvement of some of them in the transition planning process. Again, legislation is referred to. Ward et al. suggest that statutory guidance was not being followed as it should have been. Specifically, although parents were asked about changes they would like to see made to the planning process, Ward et al. note that these changes were precisely what statutory guidance says should happen already, or what would normally constitute good practice.

Echoing a number of authors in the author's literature review (cf Morris, 2002; Bellis, 2003; Mittler, 2007; Bangser, 2008), as well as the aforementioned guidance documentation accompanying the Act, the need for a named co-ordinator for the young people and families in question was re-iterated. Ward et al. suggest a personal adviser from the 'connexions' service. The 'connexions' service was introduced in England as a universal service, but also a service for 'vulnerable' young people. It was envisaged that the personal advisers (PAs) of the connexions service would support, in particular, those young people who were most at risk of falling into what was then known as the 'NEET' category (i.e. not in education or employment). The term now in use here in Scotland is 'More Choices, More Chances' (cf Scottish Executive, 2006). Young people with ASN were seen as fitting into the 'at risk' category. Unfortunately, the 'connexions' service now seems to have fallen victim to financial constraints in the UK (BBC News, August, 2010; July, 2011).

In the aforementioned study by Cullen et al. (cf 2009), PAs from the connexions service were interviewed. The authors of the study suggest that, amongst the PAs interviewed, there was a lack of expertise in terms of special educational needs and that the PAs worked in a diverse variety of ways without always following agreed procedures. Thus, even when there is a 'named' or 'link' individual in place, they are perhaps not always as effective as they could be.

Earlier in this review, there was a consideration of the historical development of educational settings, like schools, as a location for the post-school transition meeting. However, US research involving culturally diverse students with 'learning disabilities' or 'LD', the term used in the study, suggests that the students themselves saw the home rather than school as the most appropriate place to look at post-school pathways and choices. The students also saw themselves or other family members as the 'key players' in the process rather than a Teacher or other adult from an education setting. In fact the study suggests that the students felt that their efforts to determine their future life-direction were 'thwarted' in the context of a school. The study (Trainor, 2005) uses the expression 'self-determination' to describe the process whereby the students take control of planning for their futures. As stated, the Trainor study was based upon culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students in the US. The students represented the African American, Hispanic American, and European American populations.

Earlier the author referred to the work of Mittler (cf 2008), who discussed the same idea, where young people and their parents/carers speak up for themselves about their futures. Self-determination, or 'self-advocacy', as Mittler puts it, is defined in various ways in the literature but common threads across definitions include choice, decision-making, and goal attainment.

Overall, the idea of self-determination seems to require the young person to self-evaluate, act upon decisions and learn from their experiences. There seems to be a need to effectively prepare young people to have active roles in the transition process. How to do this remains a challenge for educators, although, as stated above, the source of the self-determination skills may be parents and the family rather than Teachers or other professionals. Some of the key skills the young people may need to develop are:

- Actively participating in meetings
- Requesting services and accommodations

Another important question that has not been sufficiently addressed in existing research, according to Trainor is the impact of students' cultural identities on their ability to develop self-determination skills. As mentioned above, the participants in the 2005 Trainor study came from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Trainor is referring to diversity in US schools but the comments are arguably applicable in a diverse multicultural UK educational community also.

In this part of the study, the author has discussed the degree to which young people are involved in the transition meetings themselves in the UK and elsewhere, and, for example, the extent to which the relevant professionals (plus the young people and their parents / carers) feel that the meetings are effective. However, this study concerns

collaboration among professionals and between professionals and young people / families at the school to post-school point in general. The author thought it useful, therefore, to consider research relating to planning for transitions.

Dee (2006), for example, tracked twelve young people in England over three years as they left school. Although Dee's work is not based in Scotland, the author was drawn to it for a number of reasons. Firstly, the research described individuals in some detail. To the author, this personalised the research and made it more meaningful allowing the author to think of the transition process as something which profoundly affects human beings rather than being an abstract consideration of a 'process' and how it might be improved. The additional needs of the individuals were described. They ranged from profound deafness to emotional and behavioural difficulties to moderate learning difficulties. The descriptions emphasised the wide range of needs present in the additional needs population.

Dee found that in legislation relating to the post-school transition in England, which she saw as possibly applying to young people between the ages of 14 and 25, a number of themes emerged. These included the need for a personalised, regularly reviewed plan at the transition stage, the need to place the needs of the young people themselves at the centre of the process and a need for continuity between child and adult services. This discussion included the idea that, in England, there is a recommendation in legislation that a plan

be created, centred upon the needs of the young person (Tarleton and Ward, 2005). In Scotland, there is a similar recommendation in the Code of Practice deriving from the ASL Act of 2004. In both countries, there is a sense from the research that, although desirable, such plans are not always put into place, nor did they always take sufficient account of the views of the young people (cf Mittler, 2007).

There are many recommendations in Dee's work in relation to improving transition planning. Of additional importance to having a plan in the first place, says Dee, are the quality of the experiences that support the plan's development and implementation in order to enhance young people's quality of life. These experiences can be marred, says Dee, by a lack of real choice for the young people with a disability due to barriers like transport difficulties, lack of access to leisure facilities plus attitudinal barriers. However, part of the way around these difficulties is the development of a curriculum at the school-stage which is more transition-focused, where links are created between a curriculum in which planning for the young person is an integral part and their post-school options and destinations. A 'link-worker' like the 'personal advisers' provided by the English 'connexions' service, says Dee, could help to support the young person's physical access to services or provide psychological or practical support.

Other researchers have also considered the process of planning for transitions. Tarleton and Ward (cf 2005), mentioned earlier, discuss

making the format of information presented to the young people more appropriate prior to and during transition meetings. Their suggestions include:

- The use of age-appropriate language
- Text of appropriate length and size
- The use of images where appropriate

Carnaby et al. (cf 2003) also make a number of recommendations about how to engage young people with ASN in the planning process in relation to young people leaving a school with ASN provision in the South of England. The study was conducted in an inner-city special school in England for children and young people with learning disabilities, aged 4 to 19 years. It focussed in particular upon ongoing changes to the transition planning process designed to make it more focussed upon the needs of the young person. The study looked at the frequency of interaction between the professionals and the young person and/or their parents / carers as opposed to interaction between the professionals to the exclusion of the young person.

2.4.3.2 Views of professionals of planning and preparation of transition meetings

The author began to look for other research concerning professionals' experiences of collaboration during transition planning and preparation. It proved very difficult to locate examples of research in this area. Initially only two, by Axel Kaehne and Stephen Beyer (2008;

2009) of the Welsh Centre for Learning Disabilities, cited earlier, and Mallinson (2009) seemed to entirely 'fit the bill'. However, through contact with the authors themselves other pieces of research relating to this topic were suggested.

Kaehne and Beyer (2008) carried out research that examined 'what works' in transition planning for young people with ASN. This study followed 148 young people in three English, two Welsh and one Scottish local authority. Of particular interest to the author was a follow-up study by these researchers the following year (cf Kaehne & Beyer, 2009). This follow-up study refers to the results of interviews carried out with professionals in the same local authorities as their first study. Thirty professionals in total were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. Fifteen out of the 30 were 'Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators' (SENCOs) in special schools; 5 were SENCOs in colleges. The remainder were employment support service staff or Careers Service managers. A thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the data from the interviews. The professionals were asked to give their views of what they felt were the desired outcomes of the collaborative planning and meetings which take place in the final years of school for young people with additional needs across the UK.

The authors began by emphasising the amount of scrutiny that this transition stage has received in recent years, and the government drive to improve it for the young people concerned. However, they say, there remain difficulties with the process in terms of a lack of

emphasis as they put it upon 'concrete' outcomes of the transition process for the young people. There was also a lack of effective communication between agencies at this stage and, particularly, limited supported employment for the young people post-school.

More than once in these studies, the authors refer to the statutory requirement in legislation in England and Wales requiring a transition meeting at the end of secondary school. They refer to Careers Advisers, for example, who felt that the core task within the transition process for them was the attendance at meetings as laid down in statutory regulations in order to achieve person-centred planning for the individual.

Kaehne and Beyer identified the school to post-school transition meeting as a point where collaboration occurs between school, further education, and other services. This collaboration, say the authors, was identified as a goal of the meetings by Careers Advisers in particular.

Importantly, the Careers Advisers referred to in the study also made it clear that they had a statutory duty to complete a transition plan, referred to in the study as a 'person-centred plan', for the young people concerned. Despite the statutory nature of such plans in the UK, it seems that 1 in 5 young people with ASN may never have a plan completed on their behalf (cf Mittler, 2008).

Mallinson (2009) conducted research in one Scottish local authority concerning the views of a small group of students regarding their support during the transition process. Focus groups and follow-up interviews were used to gather the data. There were 17 students in the focus groups and 11 in the follow-up interviews. Five college Teachers were also part of the sample. Results from Mallinson's study include suggestions about how to improve transition support and develop students' resilience.

Wehman, Smith and Schall (2009) consider the practical planning needs of professionals to support young adults with autism to make the transition from school to post-school. Also on the theme of planning transitions, the work of Heffernan (2012) relates to post-secondary transition plans (which are mandatory in the USA as part of the individual education program (IEP) for all students aged 16 and over who are eligible for the support of special education services). Their study shows that limited progress has been made over the past twenty years in Teacher training and in the confidence that Teachers have in their ability to develop and implement effective post-secondary transition plans.

All of the participants in the Kaehne and Beyer study were asked what they thought the desired outcomes of the transition meetings and process should be. They divided their responses into 'soft' and 'hard'

outcomes, the latter being the so-called 'concrete' outcomes referred to earlier.

The 'soft' outcomes referred to here encompass preparing the young person for adult life, helping them to develop independence plus social skills. While these are classed as 'soft' outcomes in the study, the acquisition of these skills might contribute to the achievement of a specific goal, such as employment or college attendance. In other words the outcomes were seen as a definite prerequisite to a defined end-point, in this case college or employment. Thus, these outcomes could arguably also be seen as 'concrete' for the young person.

The respondents in the Kaehne and Beyer study were asked specifically what they thought the desirable outcomes of collaborative transition planning were for the young people concerned. 'Awareness of post transition options' and 'independence' were the most popular responses, similar to the aforementioned 'soft' responses. However, so-called 'hard' responses like 'college-placements' or 'employment' were also cited, amongst others.

Overall, this study seemed to find a focus upon the process of collaboration of transition rather than specific, concrete outcomes. Many of the professionals interviewed in the studies seemed to see the purpose of the transition meetings as a vehicle to improve collaboration between children's and adult services, rather than specific outcomes for the young people themselves. Therefore, the

purpose of transition arrangements seemed to be, according to Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) and Careers staff in the study, to properly execute the processes and procedures rather than to effect any real change for the person concerned: the young person with learning disabilities.

Measures used by government at a local and national level to evaluate the effectiveness of transition, whether in the UK or elsewhere, might therefore be based upon 'following procedures' or even 'improving collaboration'. If this is the case, transitions will have been seen as effective, at least in the context of the participants in the Kaehne and Beyer study.

On the other hand, in a study from the US, Finn and Kohler (2010) discuss the outcomes of the so called 'transition outcomes project' (TOP). This project was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of delivering transition services through individualized education programs (IEPs).

The 'TOP' system appeared to be concerned specifically with effective outcomes for the young person. 'TOP' seemed to chime with one of the aims of the author's study: the author's interest in how effective professionals here in Scotland felt the transition meetings to be. The 'TOP' study is interesting because it refers to, for example, the 'transition requirements checklist', linked to the transition requirements of 'IDEA' (the 'Individuals with Disabilities Act' of 1990). Such a

checklist seems potentially to be a more 'concrete' focal point for the professionals than for those in the Kaehne and Beyer studies.

These studies by Kaehne and Beyer (2008; 2009), Mallinson (2009) and Finn and Kohler (2010) allow some comparisons to be made between the UK and the US in terms of what professionals in both countries perceived the purpose of transitional collaboration to be. In the UK, some professionals seemed to see following the transitional guidelines or improving collaboration itself to be the aim of the collaboration. Others saw the improvement of independence and social skills, possibly leading to a 'concrete' destination, as outcomes. In the US study the outcomes for the young person were seen as paramount, using the focal point of a checklist linked to legislation.

2.4.3.3 Discussion

In the preceding sections, the author has considered the 'state of play' in terms of contemporary transition planning in the UK, including Scotland, and elsewhere. There is a suggestion that actual experiences of young people at transition do not always match policy recommendations (cf Mittler 2007). However, some research is beginning to emerge in which the young people themselves take greater control of the process. The outcomes of this process may be 'hard' or 'soft' as Kaehne and Beyer (2008; 2009) suggest; additionally, it seems that some young people see the home as a

more appropriate place for transition planning to take place, rather than school (Tisdall 1996). A common feature of all transition planning and preparation is collaboration between professionals, and between professionals and families / young people. The next sections will therefore examine the idea of collaboration in relation to this planning process.

2.4.4 The Way Forward? Post School Transition and the 'Named Person'

One possible 'solution' to the challenges of the post school transition process, at least from the perspective of some of the professionals interviewed in the author's study (Careers Adviser & Physiotherapist 2010 interviews), is the provision of a 'named person' to support the process. The twin themes of effective planning and a 'key' or 'link' person to support the transition process recur in research relating to England and the wider UK. In fact current Scottish legislation (the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014) states that it will ensure that all children and young people from birth to 18 years old have access to a 'Named Person' to support them during the transition process.

Mittler (cf 2007) calls for a more co-ordinated and effective approach to easing the transition from children's to adult services for those choosing that as the post-school destination. McLaughlin et al (cf 2001) make a similar plea for more effective co-ordination

and collaboration between services for young people with disabilities making the transition to adulthood in Northern Ireland. Despite many years of recommendations, codes of practice and legislation designed to improve this transition for young people, Mittler asserts that (2007, p.14) “...*the needs of school-age children and young people with disabilities have not been comprehensively addressed in planning and practice...*”.

As stated, the desirability of an individual nominated as a ‘link’ person to help to guide the young person through the school to post-school transition process is cited repeatedly in research relating to the post-school transition. An example is the ‘Connexions’ service that was launched as a provision for all school-leavers in 2001 in England (cf Mittler, 2007). Specific provision is made by the service for young people with disabilities, including input from disability advisers. One of the aims of the service was to provide all young people with ‘personal advisers’ (PAs) to guide and advise them at the school to post-school transition point. Crucially, Personal Advisers (PAs) were also to be made available to provide (cf Mittler, 2007, p.18) “...*one-to-one support and guidance [for the young person] through the transition maze...*”

However, although the support, knowledge and independence of the PAs was appreciated by the young people, fewer PAs were appointed than originally planned, leading to very high caseloads. Additionally, lack of support for the PAs and poor management was mentioned.

Recommendations are made for the provision of link staff in Scotland also. In the Forth Valley NHS transition guidelines (mentioned earlier), the desirability of “...*person-centred planning*...” (cf 2002, p.13) is discussed. This planning could be supported by a ‘*key worker*’, also referred to as a ‘*co-ordinator*’ in the guidelines (2002, p.12). The aforementioned ‘Enquire’ guide summarises the requirements of Scottish ASN legislation. The guide makes it clear that some children “...*may be assigned a lead professional to help give a smooth progression [from school to post-school]*...” (2010, p.65).

This professional, says the guide, might be a Teacher, a Careers Adviser, a Social Worker, a community education worker or someone from another agency. Crucially, the guide uses the term ‘may’ rather than ‘will’, leaving this provision, presumably, as an option rather than an obligation for education authorities in Scotland. However, in the aforementioned Children and Young People’s Act (cf 2014), section 4 refers to the provision of a Named Person for all children and young people in Scotland to support transitions.

For a number of young people with ASN, then, the school to post-school transition can be difficult as they and their families try to make plans and choices for their post-school futures (Ward, Mallet, Heslop, & Simons, 2003). A key person to support and guide them through the ‘maze of transition’ (to paraphrase Mittler, 2007, cited earlier) seems necessary but not always available or effective.

A review of US educational policy and research funded by the US Department of Education, mentioned earlier (cf Bangser, 2008), also recommends the provision of a member of staff from school designated as a 'link' person between school and employers. In a report to the Committee for Health, Education, Labor and Pensions of the US Senate, Bellis (2003) refers to a study which included a mail survey to Directors of Education in every US state plus visits to three. It also included reviews of national (i.e. US) studies on transitions. This report laments the lack of designated members of staff to act in a liaison role between schools and other agencies at the post-school transition point. This is despite the pressure of legislation in the US (the aforementioned Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 1990, amended 1997).

2.4.5 Data tracking

Another theme which recurs in post-school transitions research as a possible way of improving the process is 'data tracking' (cf Bangser, 2008; Bellis, 2003; Mittler, 2007). Planning meetings take place for young people with ASN as they approach school-leaving age in Scotland and elsewhere. The research argues that it would be beneficial for the professionals involved in these meetings to have access to a 'feedback loop' providing information on the post-school destinations of the young people with whom they work. Such a loop might help them to gauge how effective their planning meetings are in

terms of meeting the post-school needs of the young person and their families. Conversely, if this feedback is not available, as some of the research suggests, the practical function of the planning meeting is unclear if those involved receive no information about the post-school destinations of the young people concerned.

Data tracking is relevant to other types of educational transitions also. A technical report by Bielinski and Yssledyke (2000) based upon educational performance from data from US schools, including special schools, makes a similar recommendation in terms of data tracking for students transitioning from so-called special schools to mainstream schools and vice-versa. The issue of data collection and tracking at the post-school transition point recurs in a report from British Columbia, Canada. The British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT, 2008) describe a data tracking system for students using a 'personal education number' (PEN) supported by the Ministry of Education. This allowed post-secondary institutions to share student data with schools in order to monitor their progress from one setting to another. Thus far the BCCAT programme claims to have (2008, p.4):

- *“Made significant gains in providing systematic access to data about student enrolment and mobility...”*
- *“Engaged institutions in important policy discussions...”*
- *“Provided students with current, reliable information on post-secondary programs...”*

It is difficult to verify these claims as the document is a report rather than a research study per se. Nonetheless, the existence of any system to provide feedback to those working with the young people concerned both at school and post-school level is likely to be of some benefit.

A report from Canada (Alberta Education Department, 2003), discusses how a collaborative team made up of some or all of the above individuals are seen as an essential part of what the report calls the *'individualized program plan (IPP) process'* (2003, p.34). The report describes how the team works to plan academic and social goals and objectives, identify support strategies, develop positive behaviour plans, and help to devise social programs to develop peer relationships. The Alberta report specifically mentions links between multi-agency planning with regards to the IPP and transitions (2003, p.42) *"...IPPs include transition goals, such as vocational skills or, in the case of younger students, goals that address the development of independent work skills..."*.

Clearly there seems to be some evidence in the literature to support the idea of the need for a plan to support a young person undertaking the transition from school to post-school settings. In the UK, for example, the National Autistic Society refers to the 2001 Special Educational Needs Code of Practice to provide advice and support for professionals involved in planning transitions for young people with

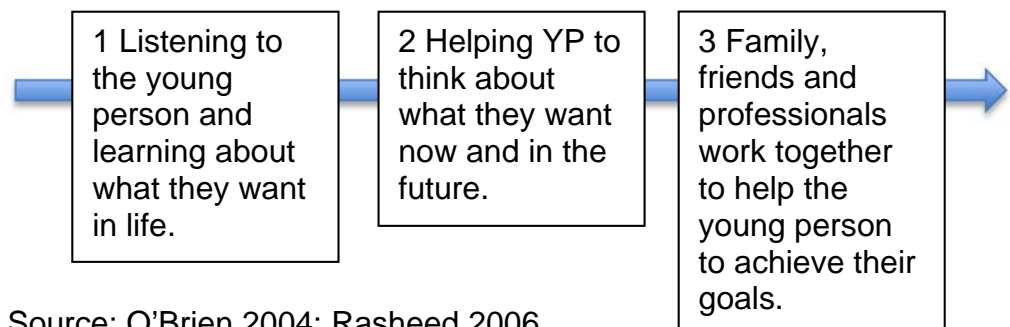
autism, including the school to post-school transition planning. The transition plan should, says the Society, draw together information from a range of individuals within and beyond school in order to plan coherently for the young person's transition to adult life. Such collaboration, amongst professionals, and between professionals, parents and young people is a crucial feature of the school to post-school transition process. In the following sections the author will examine how this collaborative process has developed over time as well as considering some of the challenges of collaborative working.

2.4.6 Person Centred Planning

Another aspect of the 'way forward' in terms of supporting young people with ASN at transition times is 'person centred planning' (PCP). PCP was developed in the United States 30 years ago; it is referred to in UK policy documentation including '*Same as you?*' in Scotland. A positive aspect of PCP is that it focuses on the strengths and capacities of the young person, not upon their deficits (Rasheed 2006).

PCP has 3 main elements as shown in figure 2.1:

Figure 2.1: The 3 main elements of PCP



Source: O'Brien 2004; Rasheed 2006

Mansell and Beadle-Brown (2004) talk of the need for a strengthening of the voice of, in this case, young people with ASN (or those who speak for them) using a person-centred planning process. To do this, they say, requires a, *"...sustained, committed engagement with them as individuals to find out what it is they need and want and to work with them at the often complex and difficult process of putting this in place"* (2004: 6). Rasheed (cf 2006) states that PCP should be a process that allows people with disabilities to make autonomous decisions concerning their own lives. Professionals can support people with ASN to lead their own plans (Robertson 2005).

2.4.7 Collaboration and the post-school transition

In this review so far, the author has referred repeatedly to the post school transition planning process as a time when successful and effective collaboration among professionals, and between professionals, parents / carers and young people is essential. The author believes it is important to shine a spotlight on the term 'collaboration' by examining literature in this area, and to consider some positive and negative aspects of the collaborative process in relation to post school transition planning. As stated, this section of the review will consider literature relating to collaborative practice in Scotland, the rest of the UK, and elsewhere in the world. The main focus of the review will concern issues surrounding professional collaboration around the support of children with additional support needs, including bilingual children. The review will consider inter-agency relationships between education and NHS professionals, the NHS and social services, and others.

2.4.7.1 Why collaborate?

Teachers, like other professionals, are required to work with members of their own profession, and with members of other professions, on a regular basis, including at transition times. Inter-agency working is

strongly encouraged in Scottish and UK children's services, including education. Evidence within the research literature abounds of this encouragement by government. However, the assumption that children with ASN are always supported more effectively by inter-agency working rather than by professionals working alone is just that, an assumption. There is also research evidence from the literature that questions this assumption.

Inter-professional collaboration in UK education is promoted strongly by the UK government (cf Mittler, 2007; Bagley, 2004). Additionally, the UK and Scottish governments have, over many years, voiced their strong support for the notion of inter-professional collaboration in the support of children with ASN. Since the Warnock Report of 1978, followed by the Department for Education and Employment (1998), the Scottish Executive (2000) and the Department of Health (1998, 2001), the desirability of inter-agency working has been voiced regularly. Another Scottish Executive publication, the For Scotland's Children report (Scottish Executive, 2001), strongly advocated the concept of collaborative working to better support Scotland's most vulnerable children. A number of other bodies and researchers advocate collaboration. The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (1998) were keen to see collaboration between their therapists and other professionals who support children with communication difficulties. On the other hand, Riddell and Tett (2001, p.1) asked "*...does the involvement of a range of professional*

agencies, parents and the voluntary sector make complicated decisions easier, or easy decisions more complicated?”

Other researchers, for example Sengupta, Dobbins and Roberts (2003), discuss the effectiveness and rate of output of collaborative working compared to the performance of individual professionals. This slowed output can be due to various professional conflicts, for example differing agendas and terminologies (Tschudin 2000; Bagley et al. 2004; Bell & Allain 2011). Here we see possible conflicts between the political initiatives of governments, who, as we have seen, are strongly supportive of the concept of collaborative working, and those of individual organisations, who, as Bigwood and Lucy (2001) attest, may not value partnership working to the same extent.

2.4.7.2 Obligatory collaboration?

The strong support by government for collaborative working in the UK has already been mentioned. The Department of Health (1999) obliges the National Health Service (NHS) and local authorities to collaborate. McConkey (cf 2002), for example, notes an equivalent situation whereby legislation in the US makes it mandatory for early intervention services to jointly create individual plans for the family (not just for the child). McConkey goes on to say that it is possible for health, Social Work and education to work together but that legislation is necessary to enforce the relationship.

Another issue, which relates to barriers to collaboration is determining when the structural differences between agencies that can lead to the development of such barriers become entrenched. Minore and Boone (2002) for example, argue that one key barrier to interdisciplinary collaboration is the belief of practitioners about the superiority of their own profession. This belief, they say, takes root while they are still in training.

Griffin (2010) shares this concern over the formation of professional barriers and advocates opportunities for professionals to come together to allow each to learn about the other professional's role. One answer, then, might be the previously mentioned idea of training jointly to obviate the formation of these barriers. Harris, Henry, Starnaman, Voytek and Bland (2003) describe multidisciplinary health professions teams training jointly in the US from the 1970s onwards. Again from the health perspective, Harris, Henry, Starnaman, Voytek, and Bland (2003) describe a geriatric interdisciplinary team training initiative (where Practice Nurses, Social Workers, Internal Medicine or Family Practice Residents, and Pharmacy Students learn about team care for the elderly).

Integrative training in some European countries has led to the idea of 'pedagogists', who are trained in more than one professional area. There have also been experiments with joint nurse and Social Work training. Indeed, joint-working is seen as a key part of Social Work

training at all levels in the UK (cf Bell, 2011). Cameron, however, sounds a note of caution, given that “...*some professionals are reported to be uncertain of what impact the ability to work across boundaries will have on their professional identity and long-term career prospects...*” (2011:57).

2.4.7.3 Barriers to collaboration

Minore and Boone (cf 2002), cited earlier, when describing interdisciplinary health teams, summarise the difficulties faced by such teams when they have to understand their own professional roles, the overlaps between their roles and those of others, and also any boundaries that exist between them. In terms of collaboration in the area of interdisciplinary education in health care, Harris et al., also referred to earlier, quote one project director who warned against administering therapy in a clinic without considering the social circumstances of a family. There also may be a lack of a link, they go on to say, between work in school, and a child's needs out with school.

One example of collaboration between two different bodies is the example of Social Workers and general practitioners. Manthorpe and Iliffe (2003) refer to work that June Huntington carried out on joint-working in the UK and Australia in the 1970s and 1980s. There was, she reports, enthusiasm for close collaboration between social

services and general practice but practitioner experience suggested that collaboration was difficult to achieve and sustain.

Manthorpe and Iliffe state that Huntington's work stands out because it presents a comprehensive, even 'devastating' analysis of the difficulties of working together. She (Huntington) focused on the distinct occupational cultures of Social Workers and GPs and outlined the differences between them, including contrasts in status and prestige, knowledge, language, focus, orientation and time perspectives, all of which act as barriers to successful collaboration.

Another serious obstruction to the notion of working collaboratively, says McConkey (cf 2002), are the differing management and funding structures of organisations. The same is true of career structures and training, plus pressures of jobs: lowering waiting lists for therapists, Social Work management of families in crisis, and planning, assessment and so on for Teachers.

In summary, it seems it is difficult to create and sustain effective partnerships between different professionals. It may be easier to invoke collaboration and co-operation than to achieve it.

2.4.7.4 Successful models for good collaborative practice

It is clear that there is a wide range of barriers to partnership working. Notwithstanding these barriers, and moving on from the debate on whether partnership working does indeed provide a better service for the 'client', it is perhaps important to attempt to identify some models for good collaborative practice.

Bland, Starnaman, Harris, Henry, and Hembroff (2000) refer, for example, to what constitutes a successful multidisciplinary project leader. They attest that such leaders need to be in an influential position over a reasonable period of time. Such leaders, Bland et al. go on to say, have collaborative styles, are enthusiastic but realistic, share power and influence, and build bridges and relationships with multiple constituent groups. Bland et al. also note that, in terms of joint training in the field of health, teams that learn together in a setting similar to the realities of clinical practice were most successful. Students early on in their training were exposed to real cases and real patients were treated.

McConkey (cf 2002), cited earlier, discusses multidisciplinary early intervention services. It is noted that many disabling conditions are identified in the first twelve months. McConkey notes that, at this early stage, professionals from health and Social Work may well be working

together to support families at home. As the disabled child grows older, educational personnel ('home' or 'peripatetic' Teachers) may also become involved in supporting the child. When these professionals work together in these circumstances, they receive high ratings from parents. They seem to display the best features of, as he puts it, trans-disciplinary working where practitioners from different professional backgrounds collaborate together to develop new ways of working to support children and young people.

Minore and Boone (cf 2002), also cited earlier, are referring to interdisciplinary health care provision in isolated areas when they make the following interesting point. They note that although isolation may serve to limit the number of individuals representing traditional health disciplines, it also means that the impact of the roles of other social service providers, for example, Teachers, police officers, and clergy on a community's health become clearer. Minore and Boone use the example of youth suicides, an issue which would touch on each group's professional responsibility. They also describe interdisciplinary health care teams comprising professionals and paraprofessional (aboriginal) workers in northern aboriginal communities in Canada and comment that such teams generally fail to achieve the hallmark of true interdisciplinarity. This 'hallmark', Minore and Boone say, is the building of an esprit de corps among team members that diminishes the guarding of professional turf.

In the work of Wright and Graham (1997) it is suggested that one way

to positively support collaboration between, in this instance, a Teacher and a Speech and Language Therapist might be to initiate the collaboration within a supervision session, under the guidance of a facilitator. Such a person could, Wright and Graham suggest, encourage both professionals to identify the personal and professional benefits arising from the collaboration, as well as the disadvantages. In addition, the authors indicate the necessity of providing staff training in order to acquire and exchange knowledge with each other.

This stance is echoed by Sengupta et al. (cf 2003), also cited earlier, who suggest that multi-agency and interprofessional learning can facilitate positive partnership working. Finally, the aforementioned Minore and Boone suggest that interdisciplinary teams should not be hierarchical. Members should participate or take leadership responsibilities as and when required.

A common thread running through much of the research into collaboration is the concept of 'collective efficacy' (Hudson, Hardy, Menwood, & Wistow, 1999). This can be summed up as the necessity for group members to believe that the combined efforts of the group are not only necessary to obtain the desired shared goal but also that each member is capable of and willing to do its share of the work. This becomes more achievable, says Glenny (2005), if collaborative teams identify and share a common 'goal' or 'project' which all agree to work towards, thereby increasing their chances of being able to work effectively as a multi-agency team.

In summary it is possible to suggest some features of good multidisciplinary practice:

- Multidisciplinary project leaders need to be in influential Positions
- Joint training needs to be in realistic settings
- Base 'child-centred' multi-agency working based on 'the home'
- Build an 'esprit de corps' to diminish the guarding of 'professional turf'
- Multi-agency teams need time to plan, work and review together
- Initiate the collaboration within a guided supervision session
- Interdisciplinary teams should not be hierarchical
- 'Collective efficacy' needs to be achieved
- Identify a 'common goal'

In terms of the education system in the UK, the previously cited Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), in their '*Research Report No.60*' (1998), advocate the need for joint inter-agency planning. One of the reasons it suggests for the desirability of such an approach is the reduction of the duplication of assessments used with children with ASN in Scotland. McConkey (cf 2002) refers to such assessments and the issuing of statements of special educational needs as an imperfect system which varied widely across the UK, but, he says, the idea was sound: to take a 'holistic' view of a child's needs.

For a child or young person with an additional support need, legislation, principally the Act (2004), makes it mandatory for education authorities in Scotland to plan jointly with other agencies and parents at transitional stages. Education authorities are required to begin the planning process six months before a child with ASN starts nursery or pre-school, or twelve months before they move from primary to secondary, between schools or from school to post-school settings. McConkey (cf 2002) recommends a focus on working with families and communities. He states that if education sees one of its main functions as supporting families in educating their disabled members to take their place in local societies they will find common cause with Social Work and health aims.

Many types of ASN are very complex. Almost all vary considerably from one individual to another. The complexities of ASN suggest that it is crucial, despite the aforementioned difficulties of collaborative working, to share information about children and young people and to discuss these needs in order to facilitate the best outcomes for the children and young people concerned. This stance is very much in line with current initiatives in Scotland like GIRFEC (cf 2008).

2.4.7.5 Discussion

In the review so far the author has tried to define ASN as a concept and relate this concept to terminology used elsewhere in the world.

The author has also briefly examined the history of ASN in Scotland and elsewhere. This was done in order to 'set the scene' for the author's study and to link the study firmly to the author's own professional life as a Teacher working in this field. Transitions were also discussed in terms of relevance to the author's professional role. Therefore, the author focused principally upon educational transitions, referring to research and legislation related to Scotland, the country in which the wider study will be based, but making reference also to UK research and research from other countries.

The review shows that for many children, including those who have ASN, educational transitions can be worrying and stressful times. As a consequence, professionals who work with children need to plan support accordingly to guide children through these difficult times. Examples of key educational transitions seem to be:

- The pre-school to school transition
- The primary school to secondary school transition
- The secondary school to post-school transition
- Transitions from one country to another or from one school to another

Of all these transitions, the weight of evidence from the research seems to suggest that, at least for children/young people with ASN, the group with whom the author is most deeply involved as a professional, the school to post-school transition is often the most

difficult and stressful transition. It seems to be a time when all the familiarity and support of the education system diminishes and the young person is often left 'without a net' at a critical period in their lives. Uncertainty about life choices and lack of information about where to turn to for help seem to make the process even more difficult.

However, it does seem that a 'key person' to guide the young person through this stage can be beneficial, if such a person is available. Over a considerable period of time, there seems to have been a requirement in Scottish and US legislation for a 'co-ordinator' to be identified to manage the post-school transition for vulnerable young people and/or those with additional support needs (Children Scotland Act 1995; Beattie Report 1999, IDEA 1990, The Children and Young People Act 2014). Planning for transitions seems to be crucial. Also, systems like electronic data-tracking systems, to track the route the young person takes post-school, can help to inform future policy and provision in this area.

Collaborative working is shown to be a fundamental component of ASN education, and the author concluded this review by discussing aspects of collaborative working. In particular, the author wished to illustrate the idea that, although collaborative working is strongly advocated within educational policy and legislation in Scotland and beyond, the research indicates that successful collaboration is not easy to achieve. The research refers to the difficulties of collaborative

working between professionals from a range of different professions, including professionals from the education profession. Nevertheless, professionals need to be aware of the importance of collaboration in terms of the support of children and young people with additional needs. Such are the complexities of many types of ASN, few if any of which may exist in isolation as distinct needs but instead are found in conjunction with other needs (so called 'co-morbidity'). Despite the difficulties noted above, the review also cites some positive features of collaborative working.

The two themes of 'transitions' and 'collaboration' coincide at the school to post-school transition phase. This is a point where professionals meet with parents/carers and the young people themselves to plan the next stage for the young person. Effective collaboration would seem to be an essential component of these meetings.

In summary, the following seem to be some of the key issues when considering transitions for children and young people:

- There are gaps at the school to post-school transition stage (cf Bangser, 2008)
- Certain groups (for example children and young people with ASN) may be more vulnerable at transition points (cf Morris, 2002)
- Transition plans seem to be important and necessary, particularly at the school to post-school transition point (cf Mittler, 2007)
- A link person is desirable to support the child or young person, particularly at the school to post-school transition point (cf Mittler, 2007; Bangser, 2008; Bellis, 2003; Morris, 2002)
- The greater the degree of resilience possessed by the child / young person, the greater the chance that they will be able to weather any difficulties at transition points (cf Jindal-Snape & Foggie, 2008)
- A process of data tracking seems important in terms of providing a feedback loop with regards to how successful or otherwise transitions are for the child/ young person. Again this seems particularly applicable at the school to post school transition point (cf BCCAT, 2008; Bielinski & Ysseldyke, 2000)
- Collaboration amongst professionals (and between professionals, parents/carers and the young people themselves is important at transition times (although collaboration can be challenging, the research suggests features of successful collaborative practice).

In some of the research discussed, matters of transition and educational collaboration are mentioned obliquely, rather than explicitly. The documents illustrate differences in perception of what constitutes transition support for children and young people, including those with additional needs.

In some countries of the so-called developed world (e.g. the UK, the USA and Canada), there is a sense of 'gaps' in the school to post-school system, of a lack of communication between school-level and post-school level agencies, and a lack of individuals designated to manage the transition process from one stage to another. Additionally, the concepts of self-esteem and resilience need to be borne in mind when considering transitions for children and young people. On the one hand, professionals and parents need to provide extra support at transition times, while recognising that feelings of worry and anxiety at times of impending transition may be inevitable. They may also be positive, contributing to a child or young person's 'arsenal' of strategies to cope with these times of change. In short, it is possible to suggest what collaboration to support children and young people should 'look like'. It seems that consideration needs to be given to genuinely providing 'equality of voice' to all the participants in collaborative planning or meetings. Thus, the 'client' (the young person with ASN and perhaps their family) should perhaps 'drive' the collaboration by choosing the venue for the collaboration (this might be the school but equally it might be a neutral venue like a café or the young person's own home). They might also choose the format of the collaboration – this might involve talking together but equally it might involve other forms of communication: the use of visual images for example. Finally, the young person (or their family) might manage the composition of the collaborative group: deciding which professionals (if any) should be involved.

As stated, the following final themes of the literature review concern the historical and legislative background to school to post-school transition meetings and planning in Scotland and elsewhere. The author also examines links between creative activities and special education. The author would like to therefore conclude this review by examining research that considers instances of visual or creative approaches being used to engage with young people.

2.5 Visual and Creative Resources

One recommendation from the Carnaby et al. study (cf 2003) was the use of visual aids such as video, photographs and objects of reference. Carnaby et al. are of the view that the use of this material increased student participation and contribution in the transition planning process. They go on to talk about individualising the material for each student with, for example, laminated photographs of key people relevant to the forthcoming discussions in the meetings. The researchers suggested that the young people practise the use of the materials during role-play sessions with the help of staff allocated to the transition process. This would, hopefully, increase the level of participation of the young person in the process and increase their levels of confidence and awareness of what is happening as the transition planning progresses. The use of visual resources like laminated photographs also clearly might help to reduce the likelihood

of the young person entering a meeting and not knowing some or all of the individuals present.

The authors made one final point about visual resources when they suggested that not only should the young people make visits to the options available to them, but that they should also make video recordings and take photographs to capture some of the experience of being there. Follow-up discussions with staff on their return to school could then take place about what they have visited and thereby help them to remain focussed upon their options and to retain them in their memory. The authors of the study pointed out that the numbers of young people involved were small and that they came from one geographical area only. They made no claim that the results can be generalised across all parts of the UK and beyond.

In Scotland, recent research exists concerning the use of drama to help reduce the feelings of anxiety experienced by some children at the primary to secondary transition point. Jindal-Snape et al. (cf 2011) examined data collected from drama professionals in a Scottish local authority who suggest that creative drama can be used in transitions to, amongst other things, empower pupils and to create a safe space to rehearse the transitions. The research also suggested that Teachers, with appropriate training and support from drama professionals, could use drama techniques in schools themselves to support children.

It does seem, therefore, that with the appropriate people involved and the appropriate format used, a link can be made between transition planning and outcome. In other words, for young people with ASN, the use of visual techniques or drama can effectively support the transition process at different stages if the purpose of such support is clear and if it is planned properly. Mittler (cf 2007), for example, recommended that any planning should be clearly timetabled with allocation of responsibility to individuals and agencies at appropriate stages.

2.6 Discussion

In the preceding sections, the author has focussed upon the post-school transition meeting, considering it from the viewpoints of professionals, parents/carers and the young people themselves. The author has also begun to look at how transition meetings have changed in Scotland due to the introduction of new legislation.

In addition, the author has considered what parents / carers, the young people and the professionals saw as desired outcomes of the meetings. One of the main research articles the author examined in this thesis, the 2009 Kaehne and Beyer study, showed, for example, that many professionals did not necessarily see 'hard' or 'concrete' outcomes arising from the transition process, including the meetings. To these professionals, such hard outcomes would include college

placements or employment. Rather, many professionals saw the process and meetings as helping the young people to become more independent and to become more aware of the options available to them. In another study (cf Tarleton and Ward, 2005), views of the young people themselves were sought and a sense that they were not fully involved in planning their own futures emerges from their work.

The professionals in the studies discussed seemed to have a variety of views of what the purpose of their collaboration at the school to post-school transition point is. As stated, some felt that their role was to help the young people to develop independence and social skills. Others felt that improving the process of collaboration itself was the purpose of their interaction.

In other studies, young people themselves had perhaps a clearer idea of how transition planning should look and what it should be for. Some felt that their home, for example, with the young people themselves and their families as the 'key players' (rather than professionals), was the most appropriate place for discussing their futures. Others questioned the effectiveness of transition planning, feeling that their needs were not always met and that they were not always placed at the centre of the process. Notions of 'self-advocacy' and 'self-determination' are discussed, whereby the young people are empowered to 'take charge' of their futures to a greater extent. There is still a potential role for adults in this more young person-centred model of transitions. The idea of a 'link-worker', for example, recurs in

both legislation and research – an advocate to guide the young person through the transition. Visual and/or drama resources might also have a supporting role to help the young people through the process by providing alternative ways for them to communicate their wishes.

Thus, although transition planning, which might include some sort of meeting, is a requirement in Scottish legislation (as well as in the wider UK), there seems little agreement from professionals about how it should be conceptualised. To the author, it seemed that a comparison of the views of professionals of aspects of the transition process, including meetings, both before and after the introduction of the Act would create a useful and fruitful study.

2.7 Research *on, with* or *by* young people: the use of creative approaches to engage with young people

As mentioned earlier, creative / visual approaches like the use of drama and photography to support transition planning for young people recur in the literature (cf Carnaby et al. 2003; Jindal-Snape et al. 2011). The author's reading of the literature began to suggest that any data-collection methods adopted with young people in the study would have to differ significantly from the approach taken with adults. It began to seem clear that getting the approach 'right' from the outset with the young people was crucial. After all, the whole of the author's study revolved around how well aspects of the transition process

worked for these young people, and how, if at all, the 'system' needed to evolve to suit their needs more fully. The young people, moreover, were human beings, and they needed to be treated as such and not as abstract objects of study. Brownlie, Anderson and Ormston (2006) perhaps summarise this issue best when they talk about moving away from conducting 'research on' or even 'research with' to 'research by' the young people themselves. In other words ways needed to be found to work in partnership with the young people to begin to see some aspects of transition from their point-of-view.

Kellet (2005, p4), for example, talks about children being part of the 'subculture of childhood' giving them a unique 'insider' perspective. This, says Kellet, is critical to our understanding of children's worlds. Kellet is of the view that children and young people need support by adults to design and implement research with adult support rather than adult management. Hobbs, Todd and Taylor (2000, p.108) are referring to consultation and assessment of children and young people by Educational Psychologists when they say "*...assessment is not of the child alone, but of the child's interaction with his or her learning context...*"

They propose a 'socio-cultural model of the child'. Such a model, it would seem, would be equally appropriate for any data-gathering process, such as the author's, when used with young people. Any data-gathering would need to be carefully planned to take account of

the context in which the young people lived and how a researcher could adapt his or her practice to engage with young people.

Thus, the author began to think about not only how to engage with the young people, but also how to try and gather data in a study involving young people. Perhaps traditional forms of evidence from the meetings would be inappropriate, given the additional needs of the young people. In other words, perhaps written notes, recorded verbal responses etc. might not capture enough detail if the young people, for example, had limited verbal communication skills. From the author's reading, research which made reference to these concerns was identified.

For example, in 1999, East Sussex Social Services worked with an organization called Triangle to carry out a consultation with learning disabled children and young people, concerning their use of a residential respite care service (Marchant, Jones, Julyan & Giles, 1999). The consultation tried to give control of the process to the young people, and to listen 'on all channels' to their views. In other words, all of the methods of communication, both verbal and non-verbal, used by the young people were taken into account. This included speech, sign, symbols, body language, facial expression, gesture, behaviour, art, photographs, objects of reference, games, drawing and playing. As a result of the consultation, some simple changes were made to the residential respite care service, for example a night-time alarm system was changed, and the

consultation resources are now used by local staff in East Sussex to gather children's views. The use of visual materials like photographs is echoed by Jindal-Snape as follows. Jindal-Snape gives the example of this approach working effectively with very young children with autism by giving them an alternative way to communicate: *"Photographs can be a powerful medium for listening to children's voices as well as helping them prepare for transition..."* (2012b, p.228).

In a study involving African-American science students in the USA (Olitsky & Weathers, 2005), there is quite a strong emphasis on the dangers of creating social barriers or divisions between the researcher and the participants due to the use of formal or academic language, for example. As Tinson states *"...the reality of researching with young people can be complex, not least because of what young people are prepared to divulge and the extent to which the young people engage with the research and the researcher..."* (Tinson, 2009, p.1).

As Gallacher and Gallacher (2008) state, echoing Brownlie et al. cited earlier, children and young people should be engaged as participants in the research process, perhaps even as the researchers themselves (as opposed to objects or subjects of research). Gallacher and Gallacher go on to say that children are experts in their own lives. They say that children are better placed to know about childhood than adults. Researchers like the author are thereby duty bound to take

children seriously in the present rather than thinking about them as future 'adults-in-the-making', say the authors.

Tinson (cf 2009) reiterates the point about being wary of using overly formal language when conducting research with children and young people. Tinson describes how scenarios or vignettes can be enhanced by pictures, photographs or cartoons in order to provide informal, personalised focal points for discussion.

There has been, according to Bragg (2010), growing criticism of mainstream qualitative methods using verbal or written forms of data-collection. Children and young people today, says Bragg, are immersed in a media-rich world and use a wide range of technology with which to communicate. Accessing some of these methods and new technologies as research-tools might well engage the young people more effectively than more traditional methods.

Bragg goes on to talk about research projects in which young people with ASN participate in and lead consultation projects. Bragg gives the examples of the 'Ask Us' project run by The Children's Society and the NSPCC's 'Two Way Street', going on to say that still and moving images are increasingly used in participatory projects and consultations, to produce images for illustrations, historical evidence, visual records, or stimulus material. The images, says Bragg, might be generated by the young people themselves, by adults filming the young people, or by the young people and adults working together.

Hurworth, Clark, Martin, and Thomsen, (2005) talk about how the visual medium has gained acceptance as part of the 'repertoire' of the researcher, giving the example of a study where photographs were taken using disposable cameras by 10 students to illustrate their impressions of life and courses at a university. Later, a reflective interview took place that revealed both positive and negative reactions by the students to their experiences.

The creative / artistic aspect of teaching pedagogy and resource-development in education is well documented. For example, there is a view that music and drama can allow children to express themselves freely: Children "*...who were normally reluctant to express themselves seemed to find drama a medium through which they could express themselves...*" (cf Jindal-Snape et al. 2011, p.4).

Gil-Gómez de Liaño and Botella (2011) in a study involving a small group of students from the University of Autónoma in Madrid, Spain, saw a possible relationship between visual working memory and attention in visual search activities. It is possible to speculate, therefore, that a similar relationship might be present in a study like the author's where visual resources are also used.

In a resource guide to student-centered individual planning from Alberta, Canada (Alberta Education Department, 2003) there is a reminder that young people may have a number of different 'learning

preferences'. 'Visual preference' is one of these and the idea of providing a visual method of discussing ideas seems to fit well in that it might be appropriate for at least some young people. Additionally the Alberta resource refers to students with possible 'memory difficulties' and the suggestion that visual cues and stimuli of various kinds might help as a means of 'working around' difficulties. Again, such difficulties are arguably potentially present amongst the student population who might form the target group for the author's own study.

In a research report from Australia, Chuan and Flynn (2006) describe how visual resources and support can be used to help children and young people of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds. Similarly, Highland Council (a Scottish local authority) has published a report recently (2009) in which the use of visual resources to support young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is described. Visual and graphic support is a well-established approach to facilitate the participation of children / young people with English as an Additional Language (EAL) in learning and to reinforce language and curriculum content learning (Franson, 2002).

Other creative activities can be used to support children / young people with ASN at transition times (and at other times also). Drama, for example, can be used to enhance a child's confidence and self-esteem (cf Jindal-Snape & Foggie 2008). Drama can also provide the child / young person with opportunities to explore issues related to transition that might be worrying them or give them the chance to work

through problematic situations and interactions (cf Jindal-Snape et al. 2011). The author therefore began to consider ways to ‘collect the voices’ of the young people in the study in a way that might be “...*more natural or meaningful to them...*” (cf Jindal-Snape 2012:232) than speaking alone might be. Indeed, Jindal-Snape goes on to say not only that the use of games-based approaches can support creativity at all ages, but that a board-game approach was used to collect the views of Scottish children about their transition from primary to secondary school between 2006 and 2010. The children with whom the games were used provided positive feedback about it, saying that it was fun, interactive and it encouraged them to talk.

All these ideas of using creative and/or visual processes and resources to aid communication and learning contributed to the development of a visual research resource: a ‘discussion poster’. The author’s interest in the school to post-school transition therefore suggested a target group consisting of students with ASN in their mid to late teens with whom the poster might be used as a data-gathering tool. There would be a probability of literacy and communication difficulties in such a group. This in turn might well necessitate a different approach to the more formal and perhaps ‘traditional’ questionnaire or standard ‘interview’ route. It seemed that creating a resource in which visual stimuli were prominent might increase the likelihood of the young people’s engagement with the topic of the study: their experiences of the transition process, including transition meetings.

2.8 Theoretical Framework underpinning the study

Existing theories of child development provide a background to this thesis. An example is Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. This model shows how a child / young person is located within a number of microsystems such as family, school and college. 'Key players' like family members, peers and professionals in the child / young person's world might occupy one or more of these microsystems, which are themselves set within a macrosystem. This could include wider influences like culture and politics. Legislation like the Act might occupy the macrosystem level while still having an influence upon the life of the child / young person. In particular, a 'college case study' was devised as part of this study, in which family members and relevant professionals were interviewed as well as young people with ASN, who, in many cases, were interviewed along with their peers in a college setting. It is important to use models such as Bronfenbrenner's (Figure 2.2) to illustrate that young people, like all other human beings, do not exist in an isolated 'bubble'. Rather, they are subject to influences from many other individuals and groups as well as from the influence of their environment and wider culture.

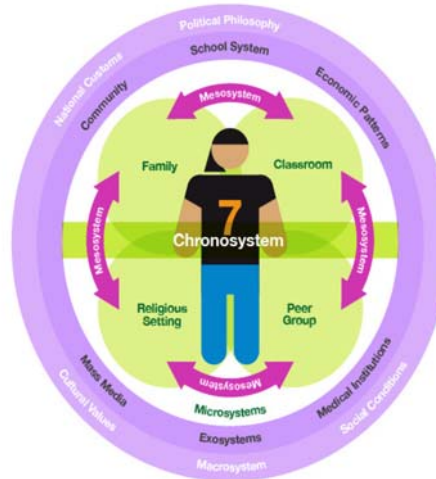


Figure 2.2: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model. (source: www.c4eo.org.uk)

An example of a framework for considering different influences upon a child's development is 'My World Triangle' (Figure 2.3), where three key influences upon a child / young person's development (the growth and development of the child, the people around the child and the wider world) are shown.

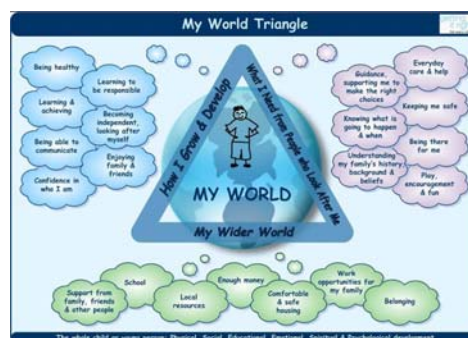
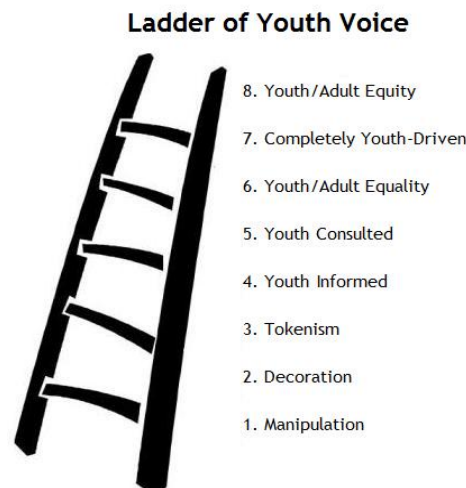


Figure 2.3: My World Triangle. (source: www.scotland.gov.uk)

Additionally, this study considers how researchers engage with young people. Literature in this area is reviewed as part of the study and questions are asked in the study about the degree to which young people with ASN participate in transition planning and meetings. Furthermore, in the 'College case study', a visual resource is designed to try and address some of the pitfalls evidenced in the literature in terms of the participation of young people in research. A well-known model to illustrate levels of participation by young people is Hart's 'Ladder of Youth Voice'



Adapted by Adam Fletcher (2011) from work by Roger Hart, et al. (1994)

Figure 2.4: Hart's 'Ladder of Youth Voice'.

(Source: <http://www.freechild.org/ladder.htm>)

In this model, as shown, the degree of participation of young people ranges from (1) 'Manipulation to (8) 'Youth / Adult Equity'. This model is relevant in that the following study could be said to 'audit' the degree to which young people with ASN are involved in planning their own futures. The professionals,

parents / carers and young people in the study are all asked to what degree the young people are involved in the transition arrangements for their futures. As these models show, the influences upon the lives of any human being, including young people, are many and varied. The results of the study, encompassing data from all these different perspectives paints a picture of this particular transition in Scotland.

An attempt has been made in this study to take account of some of these influences and to consider the 'place' of the young people within their wider culture. The author has tried to identify as many of the 'key players' in the lives of these young people as possible in order to gather data from them for the study. Additionally, the author has tried to engage with the different groups in different ways to gather the data. For example, a visual 'discussion poster' is used as part of the data-gathering process with the young people with ASN in the 'College Case Study'. As the study will show, innovative and young person centred methods, like the use of visuals like this, might help young people with ASN in the future to 'climb a little higher up Hart's ladder' and to take even more control of their lives in the future.

2.9 Research gaps and the rationale for the author's study

The author reviewed literature across 4 key areas of research that underpin the focus of the author's study: collaborative planning at the school to post-school transition point. These areas are:

- Additional Support Needs (ASN)
- Transitions
- Collaborative practice
- Creative approaches

The broad themes of the literature review made the author aware of some key 'gaps' in the literature that led towards the research study. In particular it seemed that there was little research focussing upon collaboration at the school to post-school transition point in a Scottish context. At this time of change in the process of supporting children with ASN, the author's study offers an opportunity to examine the current and former transition systems in use in Scotland and to compare the two. How, if at all, has the collaborative transition planning and preparation process perceived to have changed following the introduction of the Act? Do all professionals

working in Children's Services interpret the requirements of the Act in the same way, or is there variation?

Finally, but crucially, how do young people and their parents / carers view the transition process and are there less traditional, more innovative and creative resources and approaches that might be used to engage with these young people as part of the author's research? To planners and policy makers in children's services in Scottish local authorities and more widely, such an examination might be helpful in order to plan for the future of transition planning and preparation within ASN in this country and beyond.

As stated, some studies (cf Kaehne & Beyer 2008; 2009) examine post-school transition planning in the UK as a whole, with some limited consideration of the Scottish 'picture'. However, there does not seem to be any research that examines this transition in Scotland in detail from the perspectives of all the 'key players' (the young people, their parents/carers and the professionals who work with them). Nor are there studies that examine actual or perceived changes brought about by the introduction of the Act. The author therefore designed a study that could begin to shine a light upon this transition point, using creative resources and approaches as a supporting tool, to consider how

professionals collaborated together with young people and their families during a period of legislative change.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides detail about the methodology and research design underpinning this thesis. Firstly, the process by which the methodological stance was chosen is detailed. Secondly, an overview of the three studies which form the basis of the author's thesis is provided. Thirdly, the data analysis process is described. Finally, a short statement about the ethical procedures undertaken in this project is included. Details are presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

3.2 Methodological framework

3.2.1 Introduction

Partly as a result of his job as a Teacher of ASN, the author was interested in how human beings interact in the context of transitions and collaboration. He was also interested in systems created by human beings purportedly for the benefit of other human beings within the context of social justice and human rights. From this very wide starting point, he then narrowed down to an examination of a time and place when human beings interact: the collaboration that occurs amongst professionals, parents/carers and young people when those

young people are approaching the point where they will leave secondary school.

The author felt it was important to be conducting research that was seen as neither too academic nor too remote from educational practice (Hammersley, 1999). In other words, he wished to carry out a research project that was relevant to his own work as a Teacher and which would be of wider use within the educational community in Scotland and beyond. He did so by choosing a topic that remains 'credible' in educational circles. 'Transitions' surfaces again and again in recent research and policy as a 'hot potato' (cf Carnaby et al. 2003; Cullen et al. 2009; Pilnick et al. 2010).

The author then began to consider the methodological framework that might underpin such a study. He wished to gather together the 'voices' of those who are involved in the post-school transition planning and preparation process (young people with ASN, parents and professionals). He also wished to listen to people, or to read transcripts of what had been said, while also considering what the conscious or unconscious beliefs of the person were in order to make some sense of their words.

As the author began his reading across the social science literature, he began to consider whether his research should be qualitative or quantitative in nature. As Caruth (2013) states, the goal of quantitative research is to propose a hypothesis to be accepted or rejected, whereas qualitative research aims to produce a hypothesis. Caruth also talks of the notion of better objectivity being offered by quantitative research in comparison to qualitative.

Thus, the author envisaged most of his research following the qualitative route as he began to consider how to devise a research project within the theme of transitions and ASN. However, he also envisaged that there might be quantitative data within his study (if he was reporting upon, for example, the numbers of people involved at different stages of his study). Caruth identifies this as a mixed methods research (MMR) approach, with the 'weighting' of the research in the author's case towards qualitative. From his reading, the author identified how qualitative and quantitative approaches in combination can benefit from each other. He speculated that, as Marsland et al. (cf 2000) put it, a 'merging' process might allow, for example, the coding of responses to open-ended questions in qualitative enquiry and the creation of frequency tables from coded data to create such a combination of approaches.

The author also saw that his 'sense-making' of the words of the participants had to be at a deeper level than merely understanding their words (Aylward, 2010). There is potentially, it seems, a great deal of power in what people say. Their words, for example, might reflect their social or professional position and the influence they might have over others due to that position. As a researcher, the author had to consider how to capture the words of the professionals, parents and young people involved in the transition from school to post-school. He also had to begin to consider all these stakeholders not just as individuals but also to consider how they linked to the 'bigger picture' of legislative change, the complexities of human social and professional interaction and social justice. It seemed to him that by considering these influences upon the words of the professionals he could begin to locate their words within the societal context in which they were said.

The professionals the author planned to speak to over the course of the study would be asked to comment on an aspect of their professional role, specifically their role at a particular transition point: school to post-school. He wanted to ask them to consider this aspect in the wider context of legislative change in Scotland as well as to consider difficult issues

relating to the empowerment or otherwise of young people and parents/carers. They were also going to be asked to consider what is recognised in research as a difficult issue: collaboration between professionals and all the spoken and unspoken dimensions of professional equality of status implied by this term (cf McConkey, 2002). The author also planned to talk to young people with ASN and their parents / carers soon after the young people had experienced the school to College transition. With this in mind, several paradigms and research methods were considered. Some of the most relevant ones are discussed below. The reasons why some approaches were considered in terms of their potential usefulness to the author's research and others rejected are stated.

3.2.2 Positivism and post-positivism

Some researchers argue for a positivist, external reality, wholly measurable by quantitative methods such as a systematic analysis using, for example, line by line examination of text, followed by the generation of codes, categories, and properties (Aldiabat & Le Navenec, 2011). It did not seem to the author, however, that the instances of human interaction in which he was interested could be captured solely by quantitative research methods. Of course,

it may be that it is not possible to adopt a research approach that is entirely qualitative or quantitative; perhaps all research must contain elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Nudzor, 2009). As Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.4) attest, perhaps the social science researcher has to be a '*bricoleur*' or, 'jack of all trades'.

The author therefore rejected the wholly objective or 'positivist' methodological perspective. This viewpoint assumes, say Denzin and Lincoln, an objective, observable reality by a neutral observer. The author felt that he was unable to disentangle himself from the subjects of study: he, like them, is a member of human educational and social systems and felt that he could not observe such systems neutrally or objectively. Instead the author felt compelled to adopt a post-positivist viewpoint, which takes account of how a respondent's view of reality conflicts with their own and recognising, as Denzin and Lincoln put it, art as well as science in the analytic product and process.

From the author's reading across the qualitative research field, he began to see the qualitative researcher as one who attempts to identify meanings from other human beings and from their experiences. The literature told a story of the influence of culture upon the research process and made it

clear that there was interplay between the researcher and the data. A clear sense emerged of subjectivity influencing the interpretation of data by the researcher (Cox, Zunker, Wingo, Jefferson & Ard, 2011). Through the author's reading, a sense began to emerge of the range of possible methodological perspectives on offer, in addition to post-positivism. Through his reading the author began to consider some of these different possible perspectives in order to identify one or more of them to form the underlying framework to his study.

3.2.3 Ethnography

The ethnographic approach allows the researcher to explore phenomena in their natural settings, where, as Bath (2009) puts it, the practitioner as researcher occupies a central position as an interpreter of practice. However, as also stated, the author recognised that he was, as a Teacher, connected to the phenomenon the author wished to study: 'transitions and collaboration in education'. This is a concern shared by other researchers in the social sciences who wonder how the subjective perceptions of a single observer in a particular research setting can produce worthy and useful research outcomes (Alexander, 2006).

The author's initial reading of research related to 'ethnography' led him to realise that 'ethnography' is itself quite a broad term, which has many sub-divisions. Two sub-divisions of ethnography that seemed to link closely to the type of research which he proposed to undertake are 'insider ethnography' and 'interactionist ethnography'.

The author was particularly attracted to the first of these, 'insider ethnography', because he was not regularly involved with collaboration at the school to post-school transition stage directly. As a result, he was perhaps in a strong position to be able to view this particular instance of collaboration as an 'outsider'. This would, hopefully, allow him to see aspects of this part of the education system that those who were more directly involved in the meetings and all that went around them would not. Cooper (2010) writes about this quandary whereby the researcher sees him or herself as an outsider to the system or phenomenon of study. Cooper suggests the term 'insider ethnography' to reflect the idea that perhaps as human beings, and certainly in the author's case as a Teacher researching education, it is never possible to be wholly apart from the object of study.

The second example, the 'interactionist ethnography' approach, has been suggested to reflect the relationship and interplay between researcher and subject (cf Hammersley, 1999). However, this approach has been criticized as being too impressionistic and speculative. Despite these criticisms, the interactionist approach has been employed in recent research studies. It is defined in different ways and it seems to take different forms.

For example, in a US study involving 14 adults who had been school offenders (Haney, Thomas & Vaughn, 2011), the researchers focused analytically on the interactions described by the participants. These might be planned or everyday interactions between and among Teachers, administrators, and their students involving so-called cultural bookkeeping where people continuously construct individual and group identities. Haney et al. (2011) called this process 'symbolic' interaction, where humans construct themselves through continuous communication with others. Goffman (1959), on the other hand, formulated the so-called 'dramaturgical perspective', in which people were likened to actors, and the world to a theatre stage. Human interactions change constantly, says Goffman, undergoing a constant process of structuring and restructuring. As Aldiabat and Le Navenec

state, the 'construction of self' also arises from an internal dialogue as well as external ones (cf 2011, p.1065):

Human beings can be distinguished from other creatures because they have a self that enables them to think and to interact with themselves in the form of internal conversation... based on this internal interaction, humans act in relation to others as well as toward themselves.

In another example, Ford and Vaughn (2011) described a study which was initially framed from a phenomenological perspective. However, their study evolved into what they describe as a symbolic interactionist, dramaturgical piece, where the researchers focused on the participants' interactions more than the essence of their lived experiences. Ford and Vaughn also displayed the results of the study in frames or 'acts' like a play, using interview data as scripts. However, the author began to feel slightly uneasy with more specialised aspects of ethnography, like the dramaturgical perspective mentioned given that he was, from the beginning, more interested in the lived experiences of the participants as defined by their experiences and reflections upon the collaborations of which they have been part.

The multiple sub-divisions which all fall under the broad heading of 'ethnography' illustrate the complexity of some aspects of social science research. However, they all provided 'food-for-thought' for the author as the study was devised. Table 3.1 illustrates some of the different possibilities and options available to the qualitative researcher under the broad heading of 'ethnography':

Table 3.1: Ethnography

Ethnographic 'sub-division'	Reference
<i>"Interactionist ethnography"</i>	Hammersley (1999)
<i>"Insider ethnography"</i>	Cooper (2010)
<i>"Dramaturgical perspective"</i>	Goffman (1959)
<i>"Symbolic interactionism"</i>	Naveh (2010); Ford and Vaughn (2011); Haney, Thomas and Vaughn (2011)

Over time, the value of ethnographic studies seems to have come to be more widely recognised and accepted. In fact Cooper (cf 2010) goes further and argues against the idea that interactionist approaches are not valuable: that as insiders, Teachers or other professionals lack the distance or perspective to see the larger picture.

The author's own view of the ethnographic approach is to view aspects of it as useful elements in the methodological

framework that gradually developed to underpin this study. An awareness of the different traditions and categories within the broad field of 'ethnography' provides a sense of its richness and complexity and allowed the author to consider what place his research could have within it.

As suggested earlier, of all the perspectives offered within the 'ethnography' paradigm, the author was eventually drawn most strongly towards 'insider ethnography' perspective defined by Cooper. For one thing, due to the author's teaching commitments, plus the fact that he was rarely directly involved in transition planning and meetings, it was not possible for him to observe and analyse at first hand the collaborative practice and multi-agency meetings with which this study is concerned. His situation therefore precluded the sole use of ethnography in a 'pure' sense. As stated, this is principally because he was unable to be immersed in the transition meeting 'experience' and thereby gather data from it first-hand. As a consequence, he had to rely instead on data gathered from those who do collaborate and attend meetings (a second-hand view in some respects) and to consider their views of and attitudes towards what they have observed and experienced. The author, therefore, felt that he could adopt the 'insider ethnography' perspective in his study. Although, as a Teacher within the 'education system', he

could not be entirely apart from the object of study, in this case transition planning and preparation meetings, nevertheless he was viewing these instances of collaboration as an outsider who did not normally attend them.

3.2.4 Action research

According to Papastephanou (2006), action research is a way of combining the worlds of theory and practice. The action research approach (Papastephanou uses the German word, '*Handlungsforschung*') has been used by German social science researchers who joined efforts to bridge the gap between theory and practice. This bridging process aimed to create connections between manual and brainwork, of theory and practice, of academic knowledge and everyday experience, of 'objective' results and 'subjective' insights, of the researcher and the researched. The author's proposal to conduct practical research in his field in order to seek 'truth' in some shape or form seemed to echo this perspective. In other words, perhaps the author could be the 'link' between the theoretical perspectives of qualitative social science research and his desire to produce practical 'results'. If as Koshy (2005) states, the main role of action research is to facilitate practitioners to study aspects of practice, then this method might at first glance have seemed useful to the

author. However, he realised that it would not be possible to be 'embedded' as a researcher within transition meetings and planning, gathering data and making direct observations from them due to his professional duties as a Teacher. It became clear to the author that the transition planning process was not directly an aspect of his practice, even though it fell at least partially within the education bailiwick. He felt that he was too far removed from transition planning process to employ an action research approach, and thus this approach was partially rejected with retention of the notion of the researcher as a bridge between theory and practice remaining

3.2.5 Final position: post-positivism and insider ethnography

The author has considered a range of methodological perspectives. He rejected one, namely positivism; however, he retained one as a useful component of the underlying framework of his research, namely action research, in the sense that the author was keen that his research should link theory and practice. However, in the end, post-positivism and insider ethnography became the most robust and dominant elements of the author's methodological position and the ones which he felt he could most strongly defend. Thus, the

author was able to feel justified in adopting a methodological position that blended more than one methodological perspective, like the 'bricoleur' or 'jack-of-all-trades' described by Denzin and Lincoln (cf 2000).

The author then designed 3 studies to capture data within a Scottish context relating to the experiences of post-school transition planning and collaboration involving professionals, young people with ASN and parents. The 3 studies are summarized in the following table (Table 3.2):

3.3 Overview of research design

Table 3.2 provides an overview of the author's entire research study. Each study is then discussed briefly in this chapter, followed by a more detailed description in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Table 3.2: Overview of research design

Study	Purpose	Participants / Source	Sample Size	Data Collection Techniques	Ethics
1 Survey of professionals across Scotland (2012)	To understand the similarities / differences in transition practice in different Local Authorities (LA)	Professionals engaged in school to post-school transition meetings	16	Online questionnaire	UREC approval granted 7 th September 2012 (UREC 11132) Appendix 1
2 Longitudinal Study in one LA (2004; 2010)	Comparison of transition planning and preparation before and after Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004				Original permission granted by a different institution in 2004 UREC approval granted 3 rd February 2011 (UREC 11005) Appendix 2
2.1 Survey of professionals in one LA (2004; 2010)		Professionals engaged in school to post-school transition meetings	2004: 12 2010: 8	Interviews	Written permission from LA / NHS
2.2 Minutes of transition meetings from one LA (2004; 2010)		Minutes of meetings from 2004 and 2010	2004: Minutes related to 3 young people 2010: Minutes related to 4 young people	Documentary analysis	Written permission from LA
3 Case Study (2012) in one LA	To understand the experiences of young people, their parents / carers and the professionals working with them				UREC approval granted 7 th September 2012 (UREC 11085) Appendix 3
3.1 Survey of school staff		Views of school staff	3	Online questionnaire	
3.2 Interviews with college students		College students	9	Interviews facilitated by visual posters	
3.3 Interviews with parents		Parents of young people who were interviewed	4	Telephone interviews	
3.4 Interviews with college staff		College staff	2	Interviews	

Figure 3.1 illustrates how the research design encompassed both national and local perspectives with regards to the post-school transition point:

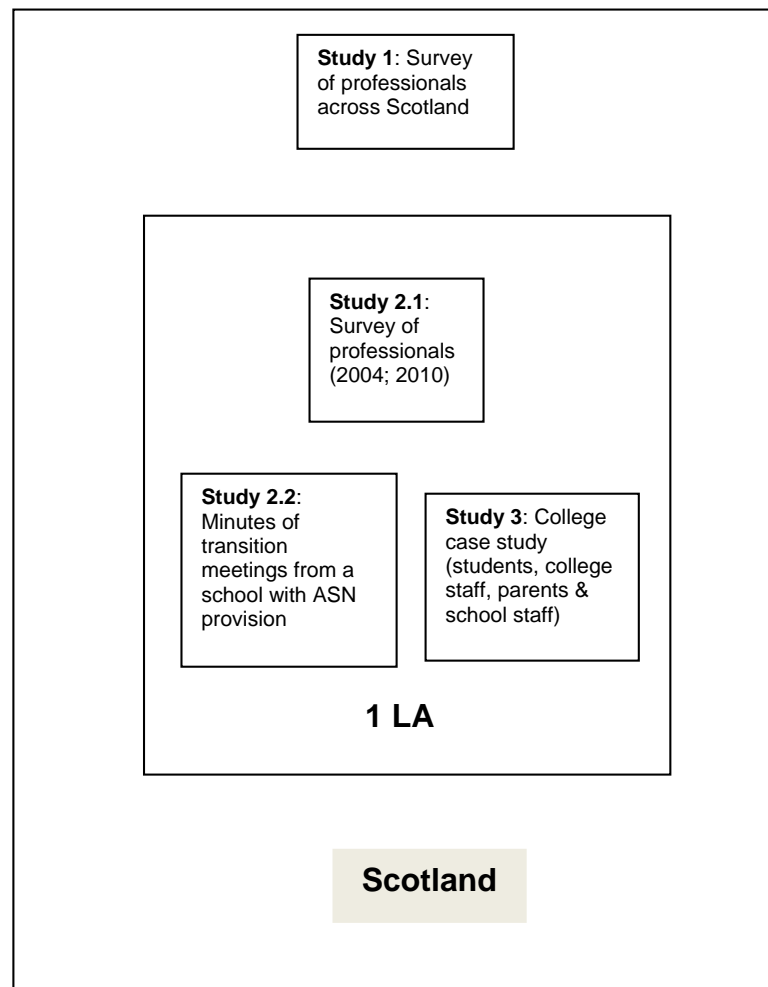


Figure 3.1: National and local focus of the research design

The author undertook progressive focusing and felt that this was a logical sequence for presenting the studies, i.e. moving from the bigger national picture to more in-depth understanding in one geographical area. Study 1 provided a national perspective from professionals. Study 2 provided the perspectives of

professionals from one local authority area over two time points. Study 3 provided more in-depth focus on one case study within the same local authority as Study 2. Therefore, although Study 1 (2012) was not carried out first, it is presented first in this thesis as it is the widest, national-level study. Similarly, Study 2 was carried out between 2004 and 2010 (i.e. before Study 1) but it is presented second as it is a local authority level study; Study 3 was carried out in 2012 and is presented last because it focuses upon one FE College and its neighbouring schools within a local authority area.

3.3.1 Study 1: Survey of professionals across Scotland (2012)

The author wished to gain an impression at a national level of professionals' experiences of post-school transition planning, including how effective they perceived the planning to be, how it was organised and how involved the young people were in the process. As a result, an online questionnaire, undertaken in 2012, was used to gather data from professionals who were involved in transition planning throughout Scotland. The rationale for this approach was that the questionnaire had the potential to cover the whole of Scotland and thus give a comprehensive impression of how transitions are perceived to 'work' across the country.

The Scotland-wide online questionnaire, using 'Bristol Online Survey' (BOS) software, was developed as a way of widening the study to the whole of Scotland. The questions in the questionnaire were designed to gain a 'picture' from the respondents of how they saw transitions in their LA. The questions included probes to try and gain a sense of the format and composition of the meetings in each LA. The questions also tried to elicit a sense of what the professionals perceived helped the transition planning and preparation process to work well, what prevented them from working well and what effect, if any, the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 ('The Act') had had upon the transition planning and preparation process.

3.3.2 Study 2: Longitudinal Study in one LA (2004 to 2010)

Following the author's desire to examine the 'national' picture in Scotland as a whole in terms of post-school transition planning and meetings (Study 1), he then decided to look more closely at one Scottish LA. To do so, he designed a longitudinal study designed in part to determine what the influence of the Act upon professionals' views of the transition meeting and planning process in the LA had been. The author felt that whereas Studies 1 (the national survey) and 3 (the

college case study) offered an opportunity to take a 'snapshot' of a particular moment in Scottish Education, a longitudinal study would create opportunities to consider how the picture had changed over time, in this case over a period spanning 2003 to 2010. In the midst of this period was the introduction of a new piece of legislation in Scotland (the Act) and the longitudinal study would also provide an opportunity to consider how the Act, if at all, had influenced the transition planning process in Scotland.

3.3.2.1 Interviews with professionals

As with the national questionnaire (Study 1), the author also wished to gather more detail at a local level about the experiences of those involved in post-school transition planning. By and large, the author used the same interview questions with the Study 2 professionals as he had used in the questionnaire in Study 1. In addition, the author introduced a longitudinal aspect to Study 2 in order to determine what effect the introduction of the Act may have had upon the transition planning process in one part of Scotland.

In Study 2, interviews with professionals, who were involved in transition planning meetings of children with ASN, were conducted at two time periods, 2004 and 2010. As in the National Survey (Study 1), the interviews aimed to create a

‘picture’ of how professionals in one LA saw transition planning and preparation, and, again, whether their perceptions were different before and after the introduction of the Act.

3.3.2.2 Minutes of transition meetings

In addition to the interviews, actual minutes of transition meetings were used as a source of data. These minutes related to meetings held in a school with ASN provision in the same LA where the interviews with professionals were carried out. Some of the minutes relate to the period 2003 to 2005. Therefore, they pre-dated the Act of 2004 (which was implemented in 2005). At that time, the now obsolete ‘Future Needs Assessment’ (FNA) system was still in use. Some of the minutes post-dated the Act. These are dated 2007 to 2011.

3.3.3 Study 3: Case Study (2012)

In order to ascertain specifically what young people with ASN and their families felt about the school to post-school transition planning and preparation, in addition to the views of professionals gathered in Studies 1 and 2, the author created a case study of a further education (FE) college in the same LA as in Study 2.

Four different groups of participants were involved: school staff in the secondary schools from which the young people had come and who had been involved in the transition planning and preparation for the young people, college students with ASN, parents / carers of the students and college staff who support the students. An online survey (Bristol Online Surveys) was used to capture data from the school-level professionals; telephone and face-to-face interviews were used to capture data from parents / carers and from the young people with ASN themselves. Nine students were interviewed in November 2012. In Chapter 6, the 9 students are referred to as 'S1' to 'S9' to protect their identity. Most of the students were interviewed in pairs. This arrangement was put in place prior to the author's arrival at the college. The pairing of the students meant that the students always had an 'audience' of their peers in the interview.

The students said that they were happy to be interviewed in pairs – that they felt more comfortable with their friends nearby. An auxiliary member of staff accompanied one of the pairs of students in order to help the student who used a wheelchair. The interviews each lasted approximately 10 minutes. The interviews took place either in the open college café area or in a meeting area nearby. The students were all undertaking a course entitled 'Towards Employment' at the college.

A 'discussion poster' was used to facilitate discussions and to record data. The author developed this visual resource as a way of engaging with the students and creating a focal point for discussion. The author's background as an artist and art Teacher helped to make the process of designing the draft (Appendix 4) and final (Appendix 5) versions of the poster more straightforward. The draft version was piloted with a Teacher colleague who made helpful comments on the layout and ease-of-use of the poster prior to the creation of the final version.

The Teacher suggested, for example, that the final poster should be more 'cartoon-like' than the draft version as she felt that this would make them more 'fun' for the students to use. The posters were used with each student. An example (S1's poster) is shown in Figure 3.2 and, on a larger scale, in Appendix 5. The posters were photographed to preserve the students' responses and the students were video-recorded using an 'ipad' device. The visual 'discussion poster' will be described in more detail in Chapter 6.

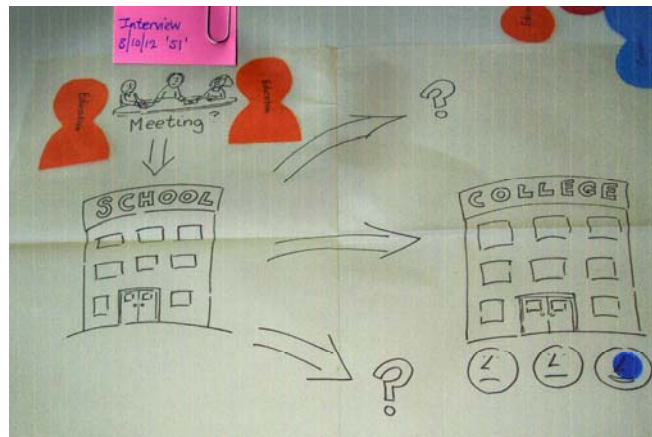


Figure 3.2: 'S1 poster'

3.4 Data Analysis

3.4.1 Thematic Analysis

As stated, the author adopted a post-positivist 'insider ethnography' methodological approach to underpin this thesis. Having done so, he therefore needed to decide on a method of data analysis. He decided to use thematic analysis as the most appropriate data analysis method for his study. Before discussing how he designed and implemented the process of coding and analysis to apply a qualitative, thematic analysis approach to the data that led to themes, it is worth stating that to a small degree, some quantitative processes were used to report on, for example, the number of professionals and young people who participated in the studies. These were reported in tabular form, thus helping the author (and the reader) to gain an

impression of the numbers of individuals, meetings etc. at different stages of the research process (cf Marsland et al. 2000).

The thematic analysis approach is defined in research literature in a number of ways. For example, thematic analysis is sometimes described as a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within data. At a practical level, a number of authors discuss the process of 'coding' emerging themes from research data and then organising the coded material using a number of stages (Black and Ubbes, 2009).

The author's data set for his thesis consisted of data from the longitudinal study: the transcripts of the 2004 and 2010 interviews, as well as copies of minutes from both pre-Act and post-Act periods, plus additional data from the online surveys and case studies, the author felt he was ready to begin the process of data analysis using his chosen thematic analysis approach. From his reading of Graff (cf 2010), he realised that he had at his disposal two main genres of data. The first genre was verbatim discourse (the actual text of the transcribed interviews in 2004, the printed text of the transition meeting minutes, the video and photographic data from the College context and the author's notes made in 'real-time' as the professionals responded to his questions in 2010). The second

genre was interpretative discourse (the notes that he made upon the scripts and other data sources).

The author then began to think about ways to organise the material in order for it to begin to become meaningful. He began to think about some of the key features of thematic analysis from his reading to date and how this background knowledge could help him to begin to analyse the minutes. Like Aylward (2010), who had conducted interviews with Teachers of Inuit children in northern Canada, the author began to see links in the analytical process between language in use and its social contexts in order to get a sense of the 'human meaning-making' that is occurring. Gradually he began to see how, in this case, the spoken utterances of professionals in telephone interviews (or their written responses on paper) could be linked to the wider educational and societal context in which they are said. Like Byrd Clark (2010), who was interested in the experiences of Italian-Canadian students learning French in Canada, the author had to become aware of how micro interactions are linked to macro, institutional level discourses.

3.4.2 Coding

In the same way that in the process of recursive frame analysis (RFA), the researcher might group recurring themes from a piece of text together under an overarching heading, the author began to read through the transcripts. He began to look for issues or ideas that arose repeatedly. He began to think about ways to 'code' different ideas in the transcripts in order to see at a glance the emerging themes of context, purpose and effectiveness.

It seems that for many commonly used qualitative research processes, like phenomenology and ethnographic studies, computer software packages can be used to analyse the data (Chenail, 2011). Partly because he did not have training or experience relating to qualitative software, and partly because he liked the idea of handling and moving around paper versions of the transcripts, the author decided to manually code the transcripts and other data. Prior to any coding and analysis, he naturally had to anonymise all the responses in accordance with ethical requirements of the study (Larkin & Harrison, 2011).

To do so, he then gathered together and laid out all the data, clearly identifying, for example, each of the scripts from the longitudinal study interviews with job title and date (e.g. 'Social Worker 1 2004/05 interviews', 'Doctor 2 2010 interviews' etc.). He also laid out and grouped the transition meeting transcripts and the transcripts of video interviews with students and telephone interviews with parents gathered for the 'case study' section. He then began to 'skim' all these documents in order to try and pick out issues that recurred or seemed important. This initial 'skimming' corresponds to the first two steps of the coding process undertaken by Black and Ubbes (2009) in a study concerning a thematic analysis of convention and conference themes for Health Education.

The author then tried, as they did, to group the data into categories, followed by a review of themes that emerged from the previous steps to determine if the grouped data and the categories identified are clearly representative of the initial data. Finally, again as in the Black and Uddes study, he attempted to link the themes to the existing literature.

As he did so he kept the key themes from his study in mind. In the main the author used colour highlighters to identify the recurring 'themes'. For example, sometimes he used a yellow highlighter to mark instances of professionals mentioning a lack

of post-school opportunities for the young people to link the comments to 'effectiveness', or blue for mentions of parents/carers feeling overwhelmed in meetings. In draft versions of this thesis the author used the same 'colour-coding' process to organise his data-analysis into different themes.

On the 1st September, 2010, while driving home, the author heard part of Stephen Fry's radio 4 programme, '*Fry's English Delight*'. It refreshed his understanding of the coding and analysis process in social science research. In the programme, Dr Kavita Abrahams, a Social Psychologist, discussed coding techniques used to gather evidence about the societies that produce different forms of text. She described how the researchers in her team tried to aggregate large amounts of data into meaningful themes, clusters and patterns which can then be analysed. The premise of the programme was that computer programmes are being developed which can undertake this laborious process more quickly and accurately than human researchers. However, from the author's point of view, the programme was interesting because he had been using these same coding techniques of seeking pattern in large amounts of data both in the 2004 and 2010 interview transcripts, and in the other data also. He recognised that all research methods involve the interaction of theoretical concerns and empirical observations (Babbie, 2008).

In his case, as stated, the author had become interested in the theoretical matters concerning possible links between professional status, language used in the meetings and the location of the meetings themselves, and observations based upon what professionals said about the experiences of these meetings. Like French and Domene (2010), he transcribed audio recordings, editing out pauses and marking the position of unintelligible words in order to help to make as much sense as possible of emerging ideas and themes in the texts. The resulting typewritten scripts became the data set for the 2004 interviews. He then added colour-coding and written notes to these scripts later. In 2010, the process was very similar, except that he produced typewritten scripts based upon the notes he made of the professionals' responses, which he then coded and added further notes to later. Likewise, in 2012, the author used a similar thematic coding process to organise data from the case study interviews and surveys. Like Delamont's field-notes (2007), his notes of the responses were not a closed, completed, final text. Instead they were subject to reading, re-reading, coding, recording, interpreting and re-interpreting. As he did so, the author felt he was beginning to see, like Babbie (2008), the puzzle pieces come together to form a more complete picture.

3.5 Ethics

As shown in Table 3.2, ethical approval was granted to conduct the author's 3 studies by the University Research Ethics committee (UREC) in 2011 and 2012. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 will include details of the ethical procedures undertaken for each study.

Chapter 4 provides a more detailed picture of Study 1 (the national survey). This will be followed in turn by Chapters 5 (Study 2: the longitudinal study), Chapter 6 (study 3: the college case study) and Chapter 7 onwards, which will conclude the thesis.

Chapter 4 Study 1: National survey (professionals' views about transition planning and preparation)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents details of an online questionnaire that was used in 2012 (after the introduction of the Act) to explore the views of professionals, from different agencies, of transition planning and meetings to support young people with ASN across Scotland. After describing the methodology of the study, the author will present the views of the professionals, followed by a discussion of the findings with reference to related literature.

4.2 Methodology of Study 1

4.2.1 Data collection instrument: Questionnaire

The author decided to create a questionnaire in order to obtain an impression of what happens in transition planning by focussing on multi-agency transition meetings across Scotland. The survey questions were derived from the research questions and research objectives outlined in Chapter 1. The survey questions included probes to try and gain a sense of the format and composition of the meetings in each LA. The author

designed an online questionnaire using the 'Bristol Online Software' (BOS) system.

Once the author had produced a series of questions and created a draft online questionnaire based upon them, he piloted the questionnaire with teaching colleagues who provided feedback upon the 'look' and ease of use of the questionnaire. The colleagues were asked to work through the questionnaire items of the draft version of the questionnaire as if they were LA representatives responding to the questionnaire. They provided useful feedback on the layout and appearance of the questionnaire as well as upon the content of the questionnaire. After a period of revision, the author felt the questionnaire was ready to be launched. The full list of questions used in the survey is included as Appendix 6.

4.2.2 Sample

Scotland is divided into 32 local authorities (LAs). In order to attempt to make the survey truly national in nature, the author contacted them all to ask whether they wished to participate in the project. The author contacted each LA Education Department firstly by telephone on their general contact number to explain that he was conducting a survey concerning educational transitions and requesting a contact name and email

address to send more detailed information about the research to. Having done this, the author then emailed the link together with explanatory information describing the research to the survey questions to the contact individual in each LA. The author considered that those who responded to the survey had received sufficient information to give informed consent by completing the questionnaire. The email text (Appendix 7) and participant information sheet (Appendix 8) both state that the questionnaire responses would be destroyed after the author's research study is completed. The questionnaire was 'live' from the 17th September to the 31st December 2012, after which the questionnaire closed and a process of collation and analysis of data began.

As can be seen from Table 4.1, 16 professionals responded to the survey. This represented responses from 10 out of the total of 32 Scottish LAs. The responses included LAs from some of the Scottish islands, cities and rural areas. Thus, the geographical spread of the responses can be said to be wide and it is possible in this analysis to pick out features of transitions that are common to a number of LAs across the country, as well as differences between them. The professionals who responded included Head Teachers (HT), Principal Teachers of Support for Learning (PT SfL), senior Educational

Psychologists (EP) and local authority officers. Table 4.1 provides a breakdown of the respondents:

Table 4.1: The respondents to the national online survey (2012)

Job title	Number of respondents
Head Teacher	2
Deputy Head Teacher	1
Senior Management Team	2
Support for Learning	4
Guidance	1
Educational Psychologist	1
Local Authority Officer	4
'Opportunities for all co-ordinator'	1

Terms like Head Teacher (HT) and Deputy Head Teacher (DHT) are perhaps fairly self-explanatory, referring to management staff within Scottish schools. 'Guidance' staff undertake a pastoral role with children / young people in schools, and 'Support for Learning' (SfL) Teachers work to support children / young people with ASN in schools, as well as providing support and advice to other teaching / non-teaching staff. 'Educational Psychologists' (EP) also work closely with schools to support children / young people with ASN. With the exception of 'local authority officers' mentioned in 4 responses, all of the professionals who responded to the questionnaire were senior education staff.

4.2.3 Ethics

A process of gaining ethical permission for the national survey of professionals' views was carried out. The first step was to submit an application detailing the study to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). In addition to the UREC application form, the list of online survey questions (Appendix 6) were submitted, the text to be included with e-mails sent out to the LAs (Appendix 7) and a participant information sheet (Appendix 8). UREC approval was granted on the 7th September 2012 (UREC 11132, Appendix 1) to carry out the survey.

Once the author had made contact with an individual in each of the LAs, the author made contact with them by email, explaining the nature of the author's research and that he wished to invite a representative (or representatives) of their LA to carry out the online questionnaire. Some LAs asked the author to complete a 'research request form' before approval was granted to email a link to the online questionnaire. Where it was necessary, the author did this.

4.3 Results: professionals' perspectives

Three themes emerged from the data as the author coded and classified them, namely:

- Context
- Perceived purpose
- Perceived effectiveness

It should be noted that these same three themes are used to organise and present the data from all three of the author's studies. The themes emerged naturally from the study data as the author sorted and coded it. They seemed to the author to provide a logical and helpful way to help the reader of the thesis to follow the 'narrative' of the thesis as a whole and of the individual studies within it. It is worth adding that the author further sub-divided the themes in each section, defining 'context', for example, slightly differently for the professionals compared to the parents / carers and young people. In the following sections, the author will present this data by organising it into these three themes.

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4.3.1 Context

4.3.1.1 Composition of the meetings

For the reader, it is useful to 'set the scene' in this study by attempting to 'paint a picture' of what the transition planning and meetings look like. This creates a sense of the 'context' of the meetings, encompassing where the meetings are held, who attends them and how they are organised.

Of the 16 respondents to the questionnaire, 13 stated that they did take part in transition meetings; thus 3 did not but felt able to complete the questionnaire and to contribute to the study. In 12 out of the 16 responses to the questionnaire, professionals, parents and young people were described as all attending the meetings from the beginning. In the other 4 cases, 1 respondent referred to only professionals being present; another stated that 'sometimes' there were only professionals at the meetings. Representatives of voluntary organisations, who attended '*if appropriate*' in addition to professionals, parents and young people, were also mentioned by one respondent. In one other case, the professionals met first, followed by the young people and their parents at a later point.

4.3.1.2 Venue and chair of the meeting

Any considerations of where the meetings are held and who 'chairs' them can also be considered to be an aspect of the 'context' of the planning and meetings process. Without exception, all the meetings took place in schools, in all but one response in a 'meeting room'. It was not specified what kind of room was used on the other occasion. School managers (Head Teachers and Deputy Head Teachers) from schools chaired most of the meetings. Additionally, other education service staff, namely Educational Psychologists, area education managers and guidance staff took charge of the meetings on occasion. However, three respondents stated that, the 'chair' of the meeting was not necessarily an education professional; one was a Social Worker, one a *'...Key Worker for the young person...'* and in one case *'...whoever is lead professional or co-ordinator of a plan...'*

4.3.1.3 Frequency of meetings

There was considerable variation in the frequency of the meetings across the different LAs. For instance, one respondent stated that the meetings were held *'4 to 6 times per year'*; another that they were *'half-termly or more frequent'*. Four respondents referred to meetings happening *'annually'*

(one of these referred to meetings happening annually for '*summer leavers*' and also for '*Christmas leavers*'). Other professionals described the meetings as '*infrequent*' or that they '*varied*' according to the needs of the young person. Two respondents made specific reference to the ages of the young people, stating that the meetings took place annually from the age of 15. Another respondent said that for some young people the meetings were very frequent, especially as their leaving date approached.

One respondent referred to 'Individual Learning Plan' meetings at the start and end of each academic year for some children / young people. The same respondent described a, '*transition meeting to prepare for post-school annually for all S4, S5 and S6 pupils in the Supported Learning Centre*'. The range in the frequency of the meetings seems to suggest that there is a lot of variation across Scotland and, perhaps, that individual LAs or individual schools determine when the meetings should take place and with what format.

4.3.2 Perceived purpose

4.3.2.1 Voices of young people and families in the meetings

Arguably, the main purpose of the transition planning and meeting process is to provide a platform for the young person and their families to voice their wishes about the young person's next steps. Therefore, it seems important to audit the extent to which the professionals felt the voices of the young people themselves (and those of their parents) were represented in the transition meetings. The responses seem to point to young people with ASN all being involved in the meetings and in the wider transition planning process in different ways and to different degrees. The young people referred to in the responses ranged from being effectively 'in charge' of the meetings to being present for part of the meeting and then leaving.

For example, a Teacher and a Principal Teacher (SfL), said that the young people had a 'main say' with regards to what should happen in the meetings and how they felt about the process. In these cases, the young people drew up the agenda

in advance together with the chair of the meeting, deciding whom to invite and jointly agreeing 'actions and dates' with the chair in the meeting itself. Another respondent talked about the young people giving their views and asking questions in the meetings, going to say that the young people were also invited to update the group on developments since their last meeting.

Similarly, in another example, a LA officer, referred to a meeting in which it was noticeable that the focus was upon the young person rather than the parent, saying that the young person in one case, who was almost 18, was capable of responding and that this was felt to be very appropriate by those at the meeting. A Principal Teacher (SfL) gave a similar example of a young person who was able to express their views in a meeting. In this case, the young person was invited and the conversation in the meeting was with them, allowing them to speak for themselves and not with professionals or parents.

In another example, young people made a presentation about their strengths, development needs and wishes for the future. In other cases, the young people were involved but to a lesser degree. One respondent stated that if the young person was "*...more able...* [they were encouraged to be present but that

sometimes it was] ...*inappropriate for the young person to be there...*"

In other examples, the professionals talked about the young people being involved for part of the meetings. According to one respondent, one young person came in for part of the meeting having already had discussions with the 'PT transitions' as well as taking part in many activities in school relating to moving on. Similarly, a Principal Teacher talked about a recent meeting in which the young person was involved at the start of the meeting to discuss their educational progress. The young person was asked how they felt about the report, at which point they left the meeting as the parents did not want them involved. They (the parents) reportedly felt that the young person would not understand the timescales being discussed and would become anxious thinking they were leaving the school the next day.

4.3.2.2 Representing the views of an absent young person

If the young person was not able to attend their transition meeting, again arguably, the purpose of the meeting remains the same: to represent the views of the young person and to discuss ways to implement those wishes. The challenge for those present then becomes how to do so accurately without

the young person being physically present. If a young person was not able to attend the meeting, various different ways of representing their views were described. One example was the recording of the young person's views on disk, to be played in the meeting. This was seen as a positive way of representing an absent young person's views because there were no interruptions.

In a further example, a young person was absent from the meeting due to '*significant difficulties*'. Even though the young person was absent, their views seemed to be represented in various ways from the use of '*talking mats*', '*photo stories*', '*Talking Power Points*', '*Transition Passports*', and '*video*'. In addition, representatives of the absent young person, who might be their parent/carer, were said to have spoken at the meeting on their behalf, perhaps after a preliminary planning meeting.

Other respondents refer to 'proxy' representation of absent young people. In one example, information from previous discussions was read out. In another an advocate, supporter, or parent reported the young person's views. Similarly, another respondent referred to Guidance or support staff in the school, or the parent, giving views on their behalf if the young person was unable to speak. In another response, it was stated that

the young person might choose not to attend but that his or her views might be presented by an auxiliary or Teacher instead.

Two examples of resources used by professionals to support the young people during post-school transition were mentioned by the respondents: these are 'Viewpoint' software (Glasgow Social Work Service, Appendix 13), and the 'My World Triangle' (Figure 2.3).

4.3.2.3 Helping the young people to prepare for the meetings

The young people at the heart of this study have ASN. They might have more difficulties than other young people with communication and/or understanding and thus might require help to prepare for the meetings. Therefore, part of the purpose of the transition planning and meeting on the part of the professionals might be seen as helping the young people to do so. A range of professionals were given as examples of those who might be involved in helping the young people to get ready for meetings in various ways.

One respondent, for example, talked about the importance of ensuring that the young person's '*supporter*' was offered the option of opting in or out for parts of the meeting. The

respondent did not, unfortunately, clarify just who this supporter might be, although it is possible to speculate that he or she might be a relative or friend of the young person's family.

Another respondent described how Social Work would carry out preparation for the meeting with the young person at home, as well as discussing key questions with Guidance or Support for Learning (SfL) staff in school. In another case, the respondent talked about the Social Worker talking the young person through the transitions process at home prior to the meeting by discussing possible questions and topics that might arise in the meeting.

School Guidance Teachers were mentioned in another example, where the young people were helped to prepare and decided jointly who should come to the meeting. Another talked about the guidance Teacher meeting with the young person beforehand to discuss the purpose of the meeting, as well as discussing the agenda and who should come. The guidance Teacher also helped the young person to prepare what they wanted to say or ask in the meeting. In another example, the respondent talked about the involvement of the Careers Service.

In a final example, the young person's Teacher would tell them what was happening that day (i.e. on the day of the meeting(s)) and what to expect. The respondent went on to say that "...*if the young person was showing signs of anxiety we would not ask them to attend...*"

4.3.2.4 Professionals' preparation for the meeting

Most respondents talked about gathering documents in advance of the meetings from the different agencies who would be involved, as well as keeping the young person and their parents informed about impending meetings. Other respondents also talked about looking at reports and assessments in advance, including, specifically, documents that contained the views of the young person and their family. The respondents also referred to the importance of ensuring that the right people were present at the meetings, giving the example of "*post-school providers*".

As mentioned earlier, according to one respondent, the young people each completed a 'My World Triangle' questionnaire with a Teacher; another response referred to a report compiled by the young person's 'key worker' in advance of the meeting. The report, according to the respondent, includes the views of

the young person and includes a record of courses the young person has been undertaking in school. Unfortunately, this response does not give any more detail about the 'key worker' post, i.e. whether the post derives from Education or some other agency.

In another case, the respondent talked of a 1:1 meeting with the young person to get to know the young person, look at their needs and ask them what they wanted from the meeting. Another mentioned requesting views from the young person, the parent(s), the Teacher(s) and other agencies before the meetings took place. In addition to the consideration of reports as above, another respondent felt that ensuring that the right people were invited to the meetings was an important part of the preparation, including, as before, representatives of providers of post-school services, if appropriate.

4.3.2.5 Post-school destinations

Various post-school destinations for the young people were detailed by the respondents to the questionnaire, as shown in Table 4.2, although it is not possible to quantify how many young people who experience the planning meetings actually move into employment or training. These destinations ranged from work, college and university, to day care, and supported

housing. Employment supported by local voluntary organisations was a further example, as was a “*package of support with options*” although this last example was described as being “*not ideal and patchy*”.

Table 4.2: post-school destinations of young people

	HT	DHT	LA Officer	Other
Work	1	0	3	5
College	2	1	3	8
Day Care	1	1	2	3
Supported Housing	0	1	3	3
Other	1	1	3	4

4.3.3 Perceived Effectiveness

4.3.3.1 Effectiveness of the meetings

All 16 respondents to the questionnaire felt that everyone had an equal opportunity to contribute to the meetings. Most respondents felt that the format of the meetings was conducive to discussion but one respondent cited “*barriers*” to this caused by parents or by the young people themselves who were “*reluctant to engage in the process*” One respondent specifically stated that the young people and parents were at the centre of the discussions. Another felt that the participants knew each other well and that this had a positive effect on the discussions in the meetings.

All the respondents felt that the meetings were effective at putting plans in place. One respondent additionally felt that the meetings were effective in that they allowed the young person's views to be heard and decisions made on this basis. Another stated that there was evaluation of the meetings by staff and the young people, although the form this took was not stated.

Ensuring clarity about who was responsible for each of the agreed actions at the meetings was raised as an additional point, although it was not stated whether this always was the case, or whether it was an aspiration on some occasions. Echoing the previous point to an extent another respondent stated that the meetings were effective if everyone attended and the required actions were carried out, but that the meetings were not always as effective as they could be. By implication, on at least some occasions, the right people did not always attend and actions were not always carried through. Finally, an important point was raised by another respondent who felt that the meetings were effective in that they brought relief to the parents who then knew what the next steps would be for the young person.

'Getting It Right For Every Child' (GIRFEC) was mentioned specifically by two respondents: The 'GIRFEC' model was used,

according to one respondent, for all “*meetings, plans and assessments*”; another cited multi-professional ‘*GIRFEC*’ training being used to run effective meetings as a positive factor. Echoing an earlier point, one respondent thought that participants in the meetings were able to contribute equally because they knew each other well. Perhaps most interestingly from a young person-centred perspective, one respondent stated that there was an emphasis on the young person ‘*taking the lead*’ in the meetings, although no further detail was given about how they did so.

4.3.3.2 Factors which helped transition planning meetings

Various positive features of successful transition planning meetings were cited. For example, certain themes like, good communication well in advance of meetings was seen as important.

In some cases, an advocate or supporter for the young person was seen as being helpful for the young person. In one case the respondent talked of the supporter helping the young person to prepare for the meetings.

Other features included the ‘*ring-fencing*’ of time to meet and plan for the young people and a sufficiency of positive and

suitable destinations for them post-school. Another interesting feature of a successful transition meeting, according to one respondent, was the building up of trust amongst members when the action points raised in the meetings were carried out.

GIRFEC was mentioned by another respondent in terms of using its guidelines to help with a team-working approach. Therefore, team-working was seen as a feature of successful transition planning. Also mentioned was a commitment to follow children beyond school until they are in further provision. Knowing the young person was seen as important, as was listening to them. This respondent used the word “*communication*” to summarise these points.

4.3.3.3 Barriers to successful transition planning meetings

The professionals were also asked about what they thought prevented a transition planning meeting from being successful. Limited resources, “*passing on*” of actions to others, lack of commitment, lack of effective communication, lack of attendance at the meetings, and lack of provision and resources were all seen as barriers to successful transitions.

In another instance, a respondent felt that other aspects of collaboration at the meetings could cause difficulties, giving as an example the presence of different personnel at each meeting. In other words, if there was a lack of continuity of personnel from one meeting to the next, this could have a negative effect.

One respondent felt that there simply were not appropriate destinations for all of the young people. Another cited the lack of provision for young people with autism/learning difficulties. In a further example, specific barriers to transition were perceived to be the lack of opportunity for young people in the rural setting they lived in and a lack of a peer group for these young people. Starting the transition planning process too late was also seen as not helpful to the process.

In two instances the reluctance of the young people (and the parents) to engage in the process was cited as a barrier to successful transition planning. For example, one respondent felt that successful transition planning was prevented by the young person with ASN not engaging with the process because *“they did not see the value in it”*.

In addition, two respondents felt that as a young person leaves school there was sometimes a gap in provision during the

summer months. The respondents felt that the provision needed to be continued so that the young person did not “*stagnate and get back into old routines*”.

4.3.3.4 Changes due to the Act

It was thought that there was more engagement of the young person in the transition process since the Act had been introduced. More active engagement of the young person in the process was cited specifically by two respondents. There was also thought to be more joint-working, and, again, that GIRFEC had had a positive effect, for example in helping professionals to create an “*integrated child’s plan*” for the young person. By contrast, one respondent simply stated that they had worked in the same way for many years and that therefore their way of working had not changed. This suggests that, in their local authority area, the Act had not had much impact on the transition process, or that they already had good practice in place.

The professionals said that they had received guidance on planning for transitions and, again, that GIRFEC training to help with meetings had also been positive. Others mentioned more general training delivered to them by their local authorities.

4.4 Discussion

In this chapter the author has reported on data from professionals across Scotland in terms of their experiences of transition planning and meetings. He also wished to establish what effect, if any, changing legislation has had on post-school transition planning. A range of interesting points emerged from the professionals' data. The discussion section is organised into the 3 themes of context, purpose and effectiveness as before.

As stated earlier, except for the four '*Local Authority Officers*' and the '*Opportunities for all coordinator*' mentioned in the responses, all of the professionals who responded to the author's questionnaire were senior education staff. Also, without exception, all the meetings took place in schools. However, interestingly, in three cases the chair of the meeting was not an education professional. One was an Adult Services Social Worker. In the two other cases, the terms used are '*Key Worker*' and '*Lead Professional*', both of which might also conceivably be non-education staff. Overall, there seems to be a considerable amount of variation in the timing of the meetings across Scotland. In most cases (but not all), parents and young people were present at the meetings.

The national questionnaire seemed to suggest that most professionals saw the purpose of the transition planning and meetings as covering:

- To discern what the wishes of the young person and their families were in terms of post-school options
- To explore post-school options for the young people

Kaehne and Beyer (cf 2008; 2009) refer to 'hard' outcomes of transition meetings. A 'hard' outcome would be where a specific, measurable result for the young person can be traced back to the discussions within a transition planning meeting.

There is a suggestion that the professionals see the above purpose for the meetings to be the same whether the young people are present or absent. It should be stated, however, that if the young person is not involved in the meeting, that there may be a reason, from the perspective of the parent or the professionals or both. They may perceive that the young person might feel 'anxious' if he or she stayed for all or part of the meeting, for example. In addition, the representation by proxy of the young person's wishes was seen as preferable by one respondent due to the lack of interruptions as a result.

In terms of what helped transition meetings to work well, a number of interesting points were raised. For example, certain themes like good communication well in advance of meetings were seen as important.. Additionally, ensuring that the 'right' people attended the meetings was seen as crucial. This point is also made in previous research (McLaughlan et al. 2001; Mittler, 2007). However, although the professionals all felt that the format of the meetings was conducive to discussion, in two instances the reluctance of the young people (and the parents) to engage in the process was cited as a barrier to successful transition planning. It seems possible to say, therefore, that, in at least some cases, the young people and / or their families did not engage with the meeting and that therefore the purpose of the meetings, without the families' presence, seems unclear.

In some cases, an advocate or supporter for the young person was seen as being helpful for the young person. In one case the respondent talked of the supporter helping the young person to prepare for the meetings. These might be professionals from Education, Careers or Social Work backgrounds. Social Work staff might work with the young people in their homes rather than at school. The concept of the 'link' person recurs repeatedly in research relating to the post-school transition (Morris, 2002; Bellis, 2003; Mittler, 2007; Bangser, 2008).

The building up of trust within the membership of the meetings was also seen as important as was good team-working in general. Successful collaboration between agencies is implied in the responses of many of the professionals when they talk about the different roles that Education, Careers Advisers or Social Workers adopt to help the young people through transition meetings. Repeatedly in research, the necessity of good collaboration between professionals is cited as being desirable by government (cf Bagley, 2004; Mittler, 2007) while a similarly large amount of research provides evidence of the challenges to team-working (cf Tschudin, 2000; Bell & Allain, 2011; Bigwood & Lucy, 2001; Riddell & Tett, 2001; Sengupta, Dobbins & Roberts, 2003). Building of trust, or an 'esprit de corps' in any setting takes time, and building trust amongst professionals is also time-consuming but crucial (cf Minore and Boone, 2002).

The varying degrees of involvement of the young people in the meetings in the meetings seems to be partly due to the degree to which they are seen by professionals as 'able' to participate and contribute. Some young people are involved to a considerable degree (for example devising the meeting agenda themselves); in other cases, adults (professionals or parents)

seem to decide the degree to which the young people should be involved.

It is possible to 'map' the varying degrees of participation of the young people shown in the survey results onto Hart's aforementioned 'Ladder of Youth Voice' (Figure 2.4).

At one end of the spectrum young people are not involved (although there may be 'proxy' representation using technology) – at the other end, they had a '*main say*' '*drew up the agenda*' etc. (i.e. they were in charge of the meeting). Also of great interest was the example of the young person who drew up the agenda of the meeting jointly with the chair and jointly agreed action points and dates in the meeting itself.

It seems possible to say, from the questionnaire data, that professionals believe that the young people in some Scottish LAs are operating at level 5 (Youth Consulted) or Level 6 (Youth / Adult Equity) of the Ladder. It also seems possible to create an amended version of the ladder to reflect the picture of youth involvement in transition planning and meetings as Figure 4 illustrates:

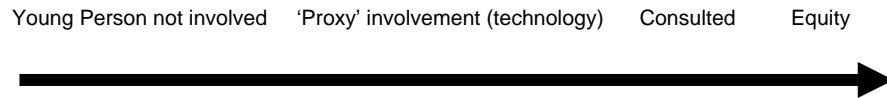


Figure 4: Involvement of Young People in transition planning

Thus, while the responses of the professionals suggest that some young people were not involved in their transition meetings due to the apparent level of their ASN, most of the young people referred to were. Many were involved to an apparently quite significant degree, being involved, for example, in setting the agenda of the meeting or making presentations to adults about their wishes for the future.

Overall, it is possible to say that an important influence of the Act upon the transition planning process, from the point of view of the professionals consulted, seems to be that the planning and meetings are becoming more young person-centred. GIRFEC was also seen to have had a positive influence in this regard. On the other hand, the difficulties with lack of staff and resources at this point in the young person's life cited by some respondents cannot be ignored; nor does it seem to be clear that there are always going to be successful post-school destinations for the young people concerned like employment or further education / training.

While there seems to be a considerable amount of variation in the frequency of the meetings across Scotland, there do seem to be common factors. For example, the meetings seem to exclusively take place in schools (mainly) under the direction of education professionals. However, other agencies, notably Social Work and Careers Advisers are also involved in the process. Sometimes, these agencies work with the young people to help them to prepare for meetings outside the school, for example in the young person's home. These seem to be examples of element of the transition meeting process moving out of the education environment. Also of interest are the frequent references to 'proxy' representation of the young people by education staff or others and the increasing degree to which the young people seemed to be 'taking charge' in some of the meetings. Many of these processes suggest effective collaborative working between agencies to try and support the young people through the transition process. The Act and GIRFEC seem to have had a positive influence upon these changes.

Finally, in terms of national variations according to the questionnaire responses, it is worth stating that in terms of post-school destinations for the young people, the availability of day care and supported housing for the young people

seemed to be greater in the urban LAs which responded. In the rural and islands LAs which responded these services were, in the main, unavailable.

In the following chapter (Chapter 5), the results of a longitudinal study from one LA are presented, providing an opportunity to compare national and local perspectives.

Chapter 5 Longitudinal Study of professionals' views of transition planning and preparation before and after the Act

5.1 Introduction

Having audited the 'national' picture in Scotland as a whole (although limited due to low participation) in terms of post-school transition planning and meetings (Study 1, Chapter 4), the author then decided to examine the situation in more detail in one Scottish LA. In particular, the author was keen to audit the influence of the Act upon professionals' views of the transition meeting and planning process in the LA. Accordingly, the author conducted a series of interviews with a range of professionals who were involved in these meetings prior to the implementation of the Act in 2004 (enacted in 2005). The aim of the interviews (carried out in 2004) was to gain a picture from the professionals of how they 'saw' transition planning and preparation. The interviews were then repeated in 2010 with, in the main, the same professionals following the introduction of the Act. In addition, minutes of transition meetings from periods prior to and following the introduction of the Act were obtained. The minutes were used as additional data to help to build a picture of post-school transitions in one LA for young people with ASN. As with the interviews, the minutes offered an opportunity to compare the 'picture' in both periods. The minutes allowed the author to note what, if

anything, had changed, and what influence the Act has had upon these changes.

5.2 Study 2 Survey of professionals in one LA (2004; 2010)

5.2.1 Methodology

As stated in Chapter 3, interviews with professionals, who were involved in transition planning meetings for children with ASN, were conducted in two time periods, 2004 and 2010.

5.2.2 Interviews with professionals

In both 2004 and 2010, ethical procedures were completed before any interviews were carried out. Heads of Service from Education, Health and Careers Scotland were contacted by letter to seek their permission to contact professionals. In all cases, permission was granted. Research proposals outlining the proposed studies were submitted to, and discussed with, the author's supervisors in both periods. The professionals themselves were contacted initially by telephone or email and then also by letter to explain the research project and to provide participant information sheets and the lists of proposed interview questions. In 2004, two professionals (a Teacher and an Educational Psychologist) were interviewed in order to pilot

the interview questions. After this, dates and times to interview the professionals were arranged. On the first occasion (2004), a telephone-recording device was used to record the interviews, which were then transcribed for analysis. An example of an annotated interview script is included as Appendix 9. On the second (2010), the responses were recorded in note form by the author and then typed up later. The reason for the differences in approaches in 2004 and 2010 is that the author felt that, by the second occasion, due to his familiarity with the interview questions, he would be able to note down the themes and ideas from the respondents effectively without the need to record every word spoken. An example of one of the sheets of annotated notes is included as Appendix 10. As in Study 1 (the national survey) this study tried to gain a sense of the format and the composition of the meetings in the specific LA. Also as before, the author also tried to elicit a sense of what the professionals perceived helped transition planning and preparation for young people with ASN to work well, what prevented it from working well and what effect, if any, the Act had had upon the transition process.

5.2.2.1 Sample

Table 5.1 indicates the range of professionals interviewed in both time periods. It should be noted that although the

interview questions were piloted with an Educational Psychologist and a Teacher, the data from their interviews were not used in the study. This meant that there were no data from an Educational Psychologist in the 2004 cohort of the longitudinal study. Similarly, although two Doctors were interviewed in the 2004 cohort; neither was available for the 2010 cohort and a new Doctor could not be approached due to ethical constraints that the author will describe shortly. Thus, there is no data from a Doctor in the 2010 cohort.

Table 5.1: The range of professionals interviewed in 2004 and 2010

2004 cohort (12 professionals)	2010 cohort (8 professionals)
Physiotherapist 1 Physiotherapist 2	Physiotherapist 2
Social Worker 1 Social Worker 2	Social Worker 1 Social Worker 3
Occupational Therapist (OT)	OT
Doctor 1 Doctor 2	
Speech & Language Therapist (SALT) 1 SALT 2	SALT 1
Careers Adviser	Careers Adviser
Teacher 1 Teacher 2	Teacher 2
	Educational Psychologist

Table 5.1 shows that most of the professionals were the same ones in both time-periods. Thus, ‘Speech & Language Therapist 1’ in the 2004 cohort and ‘Speech & Language Therapist 1’ in the 2010 cohort is one and the same person, for example. The same applies to, for example, ‘Occupational Therapist’ (OT) and ‘Careers Adviser’. The only exceptions to

this are 'Social Worker 3' and the Educational Psychologist who were only interviewed in 2010. This was acceptable under the ethical limitations of the study. For the rest of this chapter, 'Speech & Language Therapists 1 and 2' will be referred to as 'SALT 1' and 'SALT 2' respectively.

5.2.3 Minutes of transition meetings from one LA (2004; 2010)

As stated, an additional source of data was obtained to triangulate the responses of the professionals in the interviews: the minutes of transition meetings from roughly the same two time-periods. Examples of minutes from both periods are included as Appendices 11 and 12. Once the minutes had been obtained, all references to names of people or places in these documents were removed by the author.

5.2.3.1 Sample

The range of professionals recorded in the minutes of the pre-Act meetings is shown in Table 5.2. Seven young people are referred to in the minutes. The 3 young people referred to in the minutes from the pre-Act phase are coded 'YP1 (pre-Act)', 'YP2 (pre-Act) and YP3 (pre-Act)' to distinguish them from the 4 young people from the post-Act phase who are referred to later: 'YP 4 (post-Act), YP5 (post-Act), YP6 (post-Act) and YP7

(post-Act)'. For each individual young person, the minutes of several meetings were included in the records.

Table 5.2: Summary of details of transition meetings and people involved (Pre-Act phase)

Title of meeting and date	Professionals present
FNA (2003)	Social Worker, trainee Social Worker, Class Teacher, Support Teacher, Educational Psychologist, Head Teacher
Review summary (2003)	Type of profession not stated with the exception of a Doctor
FNA (2004)	2 Class Teachers, Head Teacher, 2 Educational Psychologists, Careers Adviser, Social Worker (plus apologies from a Doctor)
Review summary (2005)	Type of profession not stated (plus apologies from a Doctor)
Review summary (2003)	Type of profession not stated (plus apologies from a Doctor)
FNA (2004)	Social Worker, Social Worker in training, Class Teacher, Educational Psychologist, Head Teacher, Careers Scotland Adviser (plus apologies from a Doctor)
Review summary (2005)	Type of profession not stated (plus apologies from a Doctor)

The mothers of the young people were present at all 3 of the above pre-Act meetings. It was not stated whether any other family members were present at the other meetings from that period. The young people themselves were not present.

A further 4 young people are discussed in minutes that post-date the Act. As with the Pre-Act meetings, all names of individuals, the name of the school and the name of the education authority were removed from the minutes. The range

of professionals attending the meetings can be seen in Table 5.3:

Table 5.3: Summary of details of transition meetings and people involved (post-Act phase)

Title of meeting and date	Professionals present
Review summary (2007)	Type of profession not stated (with the exception of apologies from a Doctor)
Annual Review (2007)	Type of profession not stated but with apologies from a Social Worker and a Doctor
Annual Review (2008)	Type of profession not stated with the exception of a Social Worker (plus apologies from a Doctor)
Annual Review (2009)	Social Worker, Class Teacher, Educational Psychologist (plus apologies from a Doctor)
Annual Review (2010)	Type of profession not stated (plus apologies from a Doctor)
Annual Review (2011)	Acting Depute Head Teacher, Class Teacher, Transitions Social Worker (plus apologies from a Doctor and an Educational Psychologist)
Annual Review (2009)	Type of profession not stated (plus apologies from a Doctor)
Annual Review (2009)	Type of profession not stated (plus apologies from a Doctor and a Social Worker)
Annual Review (2011)	Type of profession not stated with the exception of a Transitions Social Worker (plus apologies from a Doctor)
Annual Review (2007)	Type of profession not stated
Annual Review (2008)	Type of profession not stated (plus apologies from a Doctor)

The young people referred to in the minutes are coded 'YP4 (post-Act)', 'YP5 (post-Act)' etc. to follow on from YP1, YP2 and YP3 in the pre-Act phase. For each individual young person, the minutes of several meetings were included in the records. The parents of the young people were present at all 4

of the above post-Act meetings. Three out of 4 of the young people were present at the meetings. All made a PowerPoint presentation in which they detailed their wishes for the future. A presentation was made on behalf the absent young person.

5.2.4 Ethics

As with Study 1, a process of gaining ethical permission for the longitudinal study was carried out. The 2004 interviews were carried out while the author was enrolled in a different University. There, the author submitted his research proposal, plus proposed interview questions and participant information sheets to his then tutors. He then received permission from them to begin to make contact in different ways with the relevant Heads of Service in the LA. The author made contact by telephone in the first instance and discussed his proposed study and requested permission to proceed. The author requested and received written permission from each Head of Service to do so. The relevant departments (Health, Education, Social Work and Careers Service) then helped the author to identify appropriate professionals to contact to request their participation. After this, each professional was contacted and the research study discussed again. Information about the study was sent to each participant in a letter (Appendix 14).

Following this, a time and a date upon which to conduct the interview was agreed.

In 2010 the author submitted an application to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) to carry out interviews and to request copies of transition meeting minutes. In addition to the UREC application form, details of the proposed interview questions were submitted and a participant information sheet (Appendices 15 and 16). UREC approval was granted on the 3rd February 2011 (UREC 11005, Appendix 2) to carry out the interviews and to request copies of minutes.

As mentioned earlier, certain ethical limitations were placed upon the author in terms of conducting the interviews with professionals. These were that the same Health professionals had to be interviewed in 2010 as were interviewed in 2004 using the original questions. Similarly, the same Education professionals had to be interviewed in 2010 as were interviewed in 2004, again using the same questions. Although Educational Psychologists were interviewed in both 2004 and 2010, only the data from the 2010 interview could be used as the 2004 interview was a pilot. Social Work and the Careers Service placed no restrictions upon which professionals the author could approach to interview in both time periods.

Permission was also sought from and granted by the then Head of Service (Education) in 2010 to approach a school with ASN provision to request the use of minutes of transition planning meetings as a data source. Two other secondary schools were also approached but they declined to participate.

All the participants were informed that data would be treated anonymously and that all data would be destroyed after the author's study was complete.

5.3 Results: Survey of professionals in one LA (2004)

5.3.1 Professionals' views in 2004

In the 2004 interviews, the author sought to gain a sense from the professionals of how they 'saw' the transition meetings. Some of the questions, for example, asked the professionals to consider how effective they felt the meetings were, and also how well they felt everyone at the meetings was able to contribute. Once the professionals had been interviewed, the responses were sorted and coded on the basis of 3 'themes' as follows.

The author hopes that by organising the data into these three themes, as in the preceding chapter, it will make it easier for the reader to follow this chapter in a logical way:

- Context
- Perceived purpose
- Perceived effectiveness

The first theme, 'context', is important because it helps to show what transition meetings in Scotland 'look like'. The second and third themes, 'perceived purpose' and 'perceived effectiveness', are also important in that professionals from different backgrounds may define these terms in different ways; they may have contrasting viewpoints about what they perceive the purpose of transition planning and meetings are for and how well they perceive that they work. Equally, by comparing the responses of the professionals in 2004 with their later responses in 2010, an opportunity to observe changes in the perspectives of the professionals, if any, is offered.

5.3.1.1 Context

In several of the responses in 2004, the professionals referred to the context of the transition meetings. The 'context' in this

case includes the location of the meetings, plus their timing, frequency and composition.

Without exception, the meetings referred to by the professionals took place in a room in a school. The numbers of professionals seemed to vary from meeting to meeting. In many cases the professionals referred to the presence of parents / carers and the young people themselves at the meetings also. The author was not able, in this study, to observe the transition meetings first-hand. Thus, it was not possible to say, for example, whether the meetings were conducted formally or informally nor was it possible to say how the meeting rooms were physically arranged. However, there were, in the responses of the professionals to general questions about the meetings, some clues about their format and conduct. The Social Worker, for example, in the 2004 interviews, implied that some of the meetings were conducted in quite a formal way by suggesting that some parents might prefer a more informal meeting setting: *“Your average parent, if there is such a thing, is perhaps less used to coming to meetings that are fairly formally set out and arranged...”*. (Social Worker 1, 2004 interviews)

In fact, the perception that some young people, their parents and some professionals felt unsure in some meetings was

mentioned in 10 out of 16 responses in the 2004 interviews.

Six further examples follow (Table 5.4):

Table 5.4: Young people, parents and professionals feeling unsure in meetings

Comment	Made by
<i>"...parents feeling ...a little less sure of their status..."</i>	Social Worker 1, 2004 interviews
<i>"I was speaking to a parent the other day whose child was due to have a review, a future needs, but she said she really found it daunting to have different agencies all speaking about her child who is basically her life, you know what I mean?"</i>	Teacher 1, 2004 interviews
<i>"I think these meetings are quite daunting for parents when they first start to come to them..."</i>	Doctor 1, 2004 interviews
<i>"Some families find it difficult to talk in an open meeting like that..."</i>	OT, 2004 interviews
<i>"Some [young people] become very anxious in large groups..."</i>	Doctor 2, 2004 interviews
<i>"Review meetings can be daunting for young people...possibly for the parents too...even for me sometimes...there are so many professionals..."</i>	Careers Adviser, 2004 interviews

However, despite the 'average parent' having possible reservations about 'formal' meetings, the Social Worker later suggested that the school setting was seen as a 'natural' place for the parents to come to in order to attend meetings: *"It's the Educational professional's territory, but I haven't found a parent over the years...it might just be that I haven't picked it up, or they've not had the chance to say this to me, but I think parents mostly seem to feel it's, if you like, natural to come to the school..."*. (Social Worker 1, 2004 interviews)

Doctor 1, like the Social Worker, suggested that most people in the meetings, including parents, felt relaxed at the meetings and felt able to contribute as a result. In addition to talking about the actual meeting, Doctor 2 talked about 'pre-meetings' taking place, sometimes in the young person's home, where discussions began with the young person about their preferred 'next steps'.

Four of the professionals (the Careers Adviser, Physiotherapist 2, Social Worker 1 and the OT) felt that the meetings were set too soon. The OT stated, for example, *"I think for a lot of the kids they're a bit too early because they happen about 13/14 and sometimes they don't leave school until they are 18."* (OT, 2004 interviews)

Both Doctor 1 and Physiotherapist 2 felt that the meetings were weighted too strongly towards the young person's educational needs: "*You do tend to have an educational bias...*"(Doctor 1, 2004 interviews); "[the FNA is]...*education focused and holistically addressing the needs of the young adult...*" (Physiotherapist 2, 2004 interviews)

5.3.1.2 Perceived purpose

It is possible that different professionals had different views of what the purpose of the meetings was. The Physiotherapist spoke of the purpose of the meetings in terms of, "*...highlighting what needs to be done...*". (Physiotherapist 1, 2004 interviews)

However, the Physiotherapist felt that the meetings were, "*...poor at [making this] happen*". For SALT 1, the purpose of the meetings was to, "*...clarify ... when the young person might be leaving school therefore enabling me to inform...the next service of when they might be coming their way...*". (SALT 1, 2004 interviews)

SALT 2 spoke about the meeting being an opportunity to consider the new and unfamiliar environment into which the

young person is about to move and to, “...*determine what needs to be put in place and shared with the new people...*”.

(SALT 2, 2004 interviews)

One of the Doctors considered the meetings to be, “...*essential...very important...first time that parents start to consider life post-school...safe introduction...to new members of staff...*”. (Doctor 2, 2004 interviews)

Thus, there seems to be a general consensus among some of the professionals that the purpose of the meetings were to consider the post-school environment into which the young person was about to move and, if necessary, to make contact with representatives of adult services.

SALT 1 felt that the meetings were, “...*invaluable...*’ and that the FNA took away some of the, ‘...*concerns and worries about moving into a new environment...*’ . (SALT 1, 2004 interviews)

One function of the FNA seemed to be starting the process of getting to know adult services professionals who would be less familiar or unfamiliar to the young people. The OT referred to, “...*what’s made things better... where you actually know the people who are involved...*”. (OT, 2004 interviews)

Other professionals spoke along similar lines: Teacher 2, for example, spoke of parents being in, “a *panic*”, when they realise that their child is about to leave the, “*very sheltered environment*”, of the school. Teacher 2 talked about transition planning in general which could include the FNA meeting, referring to the building-up of good relations with the parents and the “*open door*” policy of the school where parents could contact the school at any time to discuss concerns over transitions; phased attendance at work-placements and day-care during the last few years of school were also mentioned.

The Doctor felt it was important to consider what the purpose of the meeting was: “*I think we then have to look at what the purpose of the Future Needs meeting is: is it to look at all aspects of the transfer of a child’s care, not just in terms of education ...*”. (Doctor 1, 2004 interviews)

5.3.1.3 Perceived effectiveness

The FNA meetings were a time when a range of professionals came together to discuss future provision for the young people with ASN. In addition to the perceived purpose of the meetings, the author was keen to audit how effective the professionals felt the meetings were and what factors the professionals felt

contributed to a successful meeting. The author wondered if all the professionals saw the meetings as equally effective. One of the Doctors felt that, in terms of their perceived effectiveness, the meetings were, “... *variable...sometimes the decisions have all been made about what’s going to happen with the children...*”. (Doctor 1, 2004 interviews). The same Doctor stated that the meetings, “...*can be useful in getting a more overall view of the child’s needs...*”.

Other professionals also gave their views of effectiveness and what they perceived ‘effective’ to mean: For example, the Careers Adviser felt that the meetings were, “...*really important...*” and that they were “...*useful...for...getting a fuller picture of the client and their needs...really importantly to liaise with other agencies...*”.

The Careers Adviser went on to say that the meetings were a “...*useful vehicle to agree and identify action...and to work out who best can help the client with that action...*” (Careers Adviser, 2004 interviews).

Doctor 1 made a comment about a perceived lack of feedback about which transitions had worked well and had led to the desired outcomes and, conversely, which ones had not:

“I actually find it quite difficult to comment on that, which ones, you know, why things haven’t worked... it would be useful in fact to have feedback on ones which have gone wrong, for us to look at it within our meetings group...you know, why did this go wrong?” (Doctor 1, 2004 interviews)

In addition, Doctor 1 (2004 interviews) stated that even if the action had been agreed at the meetings, professionals did not always receive feedback about whether the action had been carried out. For example, a young person might have expressed a desire to take up a college place in the meeting but the professionals might not receive any feedback about whether (or not) the young person had in fact done so.

SALT 1 referred to the chair of the meeting ensuring that everyone had an equal opportunity to speak in the meetings. However, the therapist went on to say that this equal opportunity to speak did not necessarily apply to young people with more significant communication difficulties. In these cases, the therapist went on, an approach built more around the needs of the young person would be preferable, perhaps using communication aids like ‘talking mats’. This resource, developed by the University of Stirling, is described as *“...a social enterprise whose vision is to improve the lives of people with communication difficulties by increasing their capacity to communicate effectively about things that matter to them.”*

(Source: <http://www.talkingmats.com/>)

In a further question, the professionals were asked about what helped the transition planning process to work well. In the 2004 interviews, a number of professionals mentioned effective communication and the exchange of information, together with understanding the views of parents and the young people themselves. The Social Worker cited the need for a 'transition co-ordinator' and for the transition to be 'phased'. Similarly, the Careers Adviser supported the idea of an independent adult to speak on behalf of a young person, or parent, if they didn't feel confident to do so themselves. Teachers 1 and 2 and Doctors 1 and 2 were all clear that staff knowing the young person was a crucial element of the process.

In contrast to the aforementioned factors that the professionals felt contributed to a successful meeting, the degree to which some young people felt comfortable and able to talk freely might conceivably have a negative effect on the success of a meeting. It has already been suggested (see Table 5.4) that some young people did not feel comfortable in a meeting involving perhaps a large number of professionals. As a result, the young people (and their families) might not contribute to the meetings as fully as they might in a different setting.

On the other hand it is important to say that most parents would have visited their children's schools over many years to attend parents' evenings and other events and therefore most would feel comfortable about doing so.

Another factor that might make a meeting more difficult for some parents (and professionals) was sifting through a large pile of reports at a meeting. This, in the Adviser's view, was not easy, particularly for parents:

You're faced at these review meetings with a whole list of reports from other people and you have to try and sift your way through them, and that's not ideal...particularly for parents, to try and work out what's been said in reports (Careers Adviser, 2004 interviews).

In a general sense, some professionals talked about the school to post-school transition where there was, in some senses, a 'gap in service'. SALT 1 spoke about the 'handover' from children's to adult services as being, '*quite a grey area*' where it was unclear exactly what age children with some types of need were 'picked up' by adult Speech and Language Therapy services. SALT 1 clarified that the FNA was an example of a forum at which the needs of children receiving Speech and

Language Therapy provision could be flagged up to adult Speech and Language Therapy services. Similarly, Doctors 1 and 2 talked about a 'gap' between paediatric and adult services.

Finally, some professionals talked about one agency being 'key'. Social Work tended to be the agency mentioned (Teacher 1, Physiotherapist 1 and Doctor 2, 2004 interviews). In other words, the presence of Social Work at the FNA was seen as essential and this was seen as the agency which could 'get things done' by other professionals.

5.3.2 Minutes in 2004

5.3.2.1 Context

From the 'Pre-Act' meeting minutes (2003 to 2005), it is also possible to make a number of statements about the format and process of some of the meetings. Firstly, they also all took place in the school, although it is not possible to say whether they always took place in the same location (e.g. in a private meeting room). It is clear that quite a large number of professionals usually attended and a number often gave their apologies. The majority of professionals present were from education (Teachers, Head Teachers and Educational

Psychologists) with a number of other professionals also present (i.e. Social Workers and Careers Advisers). The mothers of all 3 young people were present, according to the minutes. However, the young people themselves were not present. It was not stated whether any other family members were present.

The large numbers of professionals at the meetings was particularly striking: there were 6 professionals each at the FNA meetings for YP 1 and YP 3. There were 7 professionals in total attending the FNA for YP2: 2 class Teachers, a Head Teacher, 2 Educational Psychologists, a Careers Adviser and a Social Worker.

5.3.2.2 Perceived purpose

It is possible to assume that the professionals and parents at these meetings felt that the key purpose of the meetings was to discuss the post-school options for the young person. It is therefore useful to consider the degree to which post-school options were discussed in the meetings. The options fell broadly into 3 categories: what the young people were (possibly) going to do post-school and where they were going to live, together with how their needs might be supported. The

options for the pre-Act phase young people (YP1, YP2 and YP3) are shown in Table 5.5

Table 5.5: Post-school occupation, accommodation and support possibilities (pre-Act).

	Post-school occupation and training possibilities	Post-school accommodation and support possibilities
YP1 (Pre-Act phase)	Adult training centre Another local centre Resource centre	Social Work care package <i>"...continue to live at home..."</i>
YP2 (Pre-Act phase)	Special needs college courses Community centre / community placement College Sheltered employment (including recycling and computing)	Support package from care management <i>"...may benefit from... Careers Scotland Key Worker..."</i>
YP3 (Pre-Act phase)	Educational / work experience College 'link' courses Supervised work experience placement College Adult training centre / resource centre Supported open employment Social Work projects Hospital placement	Care management package <i>"...would like him to be able to live independently, by about his 20s..."</i>

The table shows a range of post-school options and possibilities for the young people. The options for YP2 and YP3 seem aspirational rather than definite (the use of the words, '*may benefit*' and '*would like*'). There seem to be a wide range of training options and some employment options (the terms 'sheltered' and 'supported' are said). The data does not include information about what options, if any, the young people actually took up when they left school.

5.3.2.3 Perceived effectiveness

In the previous section it was proposed that the professionals considered the 'purpose' of the meetings to include the discussion of post-school options. Likewise, it is reasonable to suggest that the professionals saw the meetings as 'effective' if post-school options had been discussed. A range of possible post-school options were recorded, all of which, according to the minutes, were discussed at the meetings. However, the lack of attendance at the meetings by the young people was arguably a barrier to the effectiveness of these pre-Act meetings.

5.4 Results: Survey of professionals in one LA (2010)

5.4.1 Professionals' views in 2010

As stated, in the main, the same professionals were interviewed again in 2010, using the same interview questions that had been used in 2004. In the intervening years, the 'Act' had become law and changes to the transition process (if any) as a result would have had time to 'bed down'. As in 2004, the following results are grouped into 3 main 'themes' as follows. In the final discussion section at the end of this chapter, the

author will compare the responses of the professionals, separated by changes in legislation and by 6 years in time.

5.4.1.1 Context

In the 2010 interviews, the professionals made it clear that all of the meetings took place in a school and were an opportunity for professionals to discuss the future options for the young people. Social Worker 1 referred to collaboration between professionals at the meetings and the Careers Adviser stated, for example, that “...*meetings [are] held in school and chaired by PT SfL (Principal Teacher: Support for Learning)...or by [a] DHT ASN (Deputy Head Teacher with Additional Support Needs remit)...*” (Careers Adviser, 2010 interviews).

Social Worker 2 felt that transition meetings rarely took place at all and that Social Work might not be involved with those few meetings that did take place. On the same note, the Careers Adviser (2010) felt that meetings had become more infrequent since the FNAs ceased. Social Worker 2 went on to say that although ‘CSP’ (co-ordinated support plan) meetings do take place, very few young people have CSPs and therefore these meetings are also quite rare.

Finally, the comments of Social Worker 1 help to paint an apparently more young person-centred picture of a meeting in which the chair strives to include everyone, including the young person:

The Head Teacher makes sure that all feel at ease but parents do feel a bit daunted at times, as does the child...the Head Teacher provides the means for the young person to be there for part of the meeting and attempts to identify their wishes in an appropriate way – text or symbols for more severe need (Social Worker 1, 2010 interviews).

5.4.1.2 Perceived Purpose

If the purpose of the transition meeting is to facilitate or action post-school arrangements for the young person, there seems to be a perception that adult services, and in particular Social Work, needs to be represented at the meetings for this to happen. However, the Teacher made the point that a representative from the adult services did not always attend, adding that when the student was not really known by the agency the comments of the professional might be very superficial.

Social Worker 1, perhaps in contrast to the views of the professionals who saw Social Work as a 'key agency' at the meeting stage, felt that it was important to see the process as a collective responsibility. In other words, there was not, and should not be, one 'key agency' at the transition meeting point. However, Social Worker 1 went on to say that a Social Work adult worker was required to manage the process post-school. Social Worker 1 clarified that this always happened if the young person has been identified by Social Work as needing post-school support.

Social Work was seen as having a key role. They were seen as being able to offer more 'direct' help whereas the Physiotherapist raised another recurring point: the issue of the identified 'key' person to facilitate the transition process,

"[There were] ...often issues with getting the right people post-school (i.e. who is the lead person post-school?)...".
(Physiotherapist, 2010 interviews)

The Educational Psychologist saw their service as providing direct support at school level for the young person, changing to indirect support (working with service providers) once the young person had left school:

All Educational Psychologists in the service, at a casework level, are involved in transition planning for many young people with additional support needs...As a service post-school, however, we provide post-school psychological service to post-school providers rather than working with young people directly (Educational Psychologist, 2010 interviews).

The Educational Psychologist saw their service, together with other 'key' agencies, like Social Work and Careers Advisers, as a *"crucial part of the transitional planning meeting"* (Educational Psychologist, 2010 interviews).

Teacher 2 mentioned a number of areas of support by school at the transition point for the young person:

- *"Life skills to prepare the young person for transition"*
- *School making early contact with other agencies*
- *Leavers' sessions organised by Educational Psychology*
- *Links to local colleges*
- *Contact with Social Work via care managers and the transition coordinator*
- *Parental meetings*
- *Presentations by the young people"*

Teacher 2 then commented on continuity of support. Teacher 2 felt very strongly that their school carried out crucial support processes to assist young people with ASN to move on to the next stage while they were still at school.

5.4.1.3 Perceived effectiveness

The Educational Psychologist expressed the view that the meetings were essential, especially for young people who might be considered vulnerable. The example of a young person with an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) was given. The *“post-school passport”*, a pack developed by the Educational Psychology service was mentioned as a way of providing transition support for young people with ASN at this time. Various agencies assisted the young person to complete this; it contained key information to assist the young person with settling into a college or university setting. However, the Educational Psychologist went on to say that the meetings, despite being essential *“can vary in terms of their effectiveness”* (Educational Psychologist, 2010 interviews).

Similarly, SALT 1 felt that the meetings were as *“effective as they can be”* (SALT 1, 2010 interviews). Social Worker 1 also commented on the effectiveness of the meetings, making 4 main points:

- “[The meetings were felt to be effective] *in terms of looking at what’s likely to be needed*
- [There was a] *lack of clarity about who is responsible for doing what*
- [There were] *unrealistic expectations about what Social Work can provide* [and there were] *post-school budget constraints too*
- *Things on [the action plan] may not happen unless they are statutory: e.g. matters relating to adult protection...*”
(Social Worker 1, 2010 interviews)

Social Worker 1 had been asked to comment on how effective they felt a transitional support meeting was in terms of setting plans for the future provision for the young person in motion. The Social Worker took a fairly dim view of the current arrangements, stating that “[the FNAs were] ‘...*sorely missed...*’ [and that nothing had really replaced them]”.

Gaps at the school to work stage were also mentioned. Social Worker 1, for example, felt that there were very few work placements for those young people who left school at 16, and that therefore if the young person didn’t want to go to college there were few options available to them.

SALT 1 was asked to define ‘effective’. SALT 1 felt that, in this context, the word meant that the meeting defined a clear path

for the young person post-school (what road they would take) e.g. to a training setting or to college. There was also a feeling that the meeting would identify who would support the young person during this time of change and into the adult services setting. However, as Social Worker 2 made clear, it is by no means clear that amongst the professionals attending the meeting, or anywhere else, there would necessarily be such a 'supporting person' available. This is especially true if the professionals at the meeting collectively identified a Social Work professional as being best placed to take on this role. SALT 1 recommended that the balance should increase towards having a combination of school and day-care in the final years of school, suggesting, with an echo of the earlier comments about a 'named' or 'link' person, that the school auxiliary should go with the young person to the day-care setting.

Continuing in the same general vein, the Teacher felt the meetings were very effective if all the professionals attended the meeting. Similarly, the Educational Psychologist felt it was important to "*have the right people at the meetings.*"

(Educational Psychologist, 2010 interviews)

Another perspective was offered by the OT, who felt that the effectiveness of the meetings hinged upon the person who

organised the meeting. In addition, the OT felt that the 'Children with Disabilities Social Work Team' was crucial, and that this team worked well with adult services to put plans into place. In contrast, Social Worker 1 felt that a collective responsibility for implementing transition plans was preferable to responsibility by an individual or individual agency.

In terms of what might help transition planning and meetings to work well, the recurring theme of the perceived need for good communication between agencies at transition points was raised by the OT. The OT felt that there were good links between children's and adult services, giving the example of care managers and children with disabilities Social Work teams. The OT went on to say that links were better now than previously "...*transition assessment used to be done at 14, [it is] now done in the young person's last year of school ...*" (OT, 2010 interviews).

Here, the OT is referring to the requirement by the 'Act' that the LA should seek information from other agencies on behalf of the young person at least 12 months before they leave school. The Educational Psychologist felt 3 factors contributed to a successful meeting. These were:

- "*Early planning*

- *Getting the right people involved*
- *Ensuring meaningful involvement of the young person*

However, some professionals felt that the meetings varied in the extent to which the young person was able to contribute. The Educational Psychologist reiterated the point about good communication. Regular and early visits to the new settings (e.g. college) were also seen as essential. Identifying need early, knowing the young person well and, like earlier comments about the timely involvement of a Social Work care manager, the necessity for Social Work representation were also seen as crucial. The Educational Psychologist added that *“...supportive, engaged parents were a crucial part of the process...”* (Educational Psychologist, 2010 interviews).

A number of professionals saw starting the process early and knowing the young person as important factors in terms of successful transitions. The Careers Adviser, for example, spoke about the early identification of need at school and, echoing previous points about ‘link staff’, the early involvement of a named person (e.g. a care manager) to offer *“...continuity of service...”* (Careers Adviser, 2010 interviews).

SALT 1 raised similar issues like the need for early planning and having a combination of school and day-care in the final years.

One of the Teachers spoke about the importance of agencies knowing the young person well, and also in terms of parental knowledge about options for the young person post-school. The Teacher spoke of the importance of sharing knowledge about a particular young person, going on to say that the meetings worked best when the individual was “...*really known*...[by the agencies involved]” (Teacher 2, 2010 interviews).

In 2010, the Careers Adviser felt there was a gap in provision for 16-18 year olds, especially for those with severe learning difficulties. The Careers Adviser felt that if there was no appropriate work option and if the young person did not wish to go to college there were few options, or that the young person might go to college due to the lack of options but that it might not be appropriate for them. The Careers Adviser perceived, like others, that “[the presence of Social Work in the transition process was]...*critical*...” (Careers Adviser, 2010 interviews).

The Careers Adviser went on to say that officially care managers wouldn’t begin working with the young person until

they had reached the age of 18, suggesting that more flexibility was needed at this point.

In 2014, at the time of writing of this thesis, all public services in the UK are aware of cuts to staff and resources due to lack of funding. When interviewed, the Careers Adviser also spoke of many posts and services being cut due to lack of funding, giving the examples of an autistic society employment officer, a deaf society and college transport for young people with ASN.

Another factor perceived to be a barrier to effective transitions was raised by the Educational Psychologist, who felt that planning and meetings happened too late in the young person's academic career, and that post-school services were not picking up young people early enough for planning. This, the psychologist felt, made it hard for schools to pass information on.

Although arguably not a feature of the transition process itself, the psychologist also felt that young people were being fitted in to what is available sometimes rather than what was best for them. Thus, even when the communication with other agencies was effective, the services at adult-level were not always available. In the same vein, the Educational Psychologist felt

that it was important that the meetings “...*happen early enough...*” (Educational Psychologist, 2010 interviews)

Another feature of these meetings is that they are a time when professionals from different agencies come together. Social Worker 1 spoke very positively about interprofessional working and felt that it “...*has improved due to a closer relationship between Social Work and other services like Education, Careers Advisers and Health...a more co-ordinated approach now...*” (Social Worker 1, 2010 interviews).

Similarly, the comments of the Social Worker suggest that although Social Work teams have been ‘de-integrated’ from combined to individual services, adult and children’s Social Work services nonetheless worked well together “[transitions]...*had got better due to integrated service [children and adults team] being set up from 2006...now back to children’s services but links still strong...*” (Social Worker 1, 2010 interviews).

SALT 1 felt that links between children’s and adult’s provision in their service was “...*fairly good for those who have severe and profound learning difficulties...even if they have been discharged, they are likely to be re-referred [to*

the Speech and Language Therapy service] *during the transition period...*" (SALT 1, 2010 interviews). However, SALT 1 added that *"...for those with moderate learning difficulties in mainstream we might not be involved..."*

Like SALT 1, the OT also felt it might be necessary for the needs of the young person to be 'flagged up' to them at the post-school transition point. They felt that continuity *"...varies a bit...someone needs to highlight the needs of the young person to the OT if they haven't been involved with them right up to school-leaving age..."* (OT, 2010 interviews)

The OT also *"...felt it was difficult for families because there are no services for young people with a physical disability who do not have a learning disability post-school..."* Social Worker 1 felt that there was uncertainty about which service provider identified the needs of the young person, and that there might be poor contact between children's and adult services if no transition protocol had been set up. This protocol should include provision for regular meetings. The Teacher added that such a protocol was important, especially where communication had broken down and meetings or contact had not been successful.

The perceived need for a 'named individual' to facilitate or manage the transition process for the young person recurs in the responses. The Physiotherapist, for example, referred to the lack of named person or care pathway to provide support post-school, giving the example of a young person with a piece of specialised equipment e.g. wheelchair or walker. The therapist wondered who would maintain this equipment once the young person had left school and the support of the paediatric Physiotherapy service and had moved into, for example, a college setting.

Some of the professionals in the 2010 cohort had positive comments to make about the new arrangements, saying, for example, that the meetings worked well in some places. Some felt that the meetings had become more young person centred and that the young people were supported more effectively to express their wishes in the meetings. They also talked about, for example, the young people having more opportunities to speak in the meetings.

A number of other professionals also stressed the fact that the wishes of the young person were taken account of. The Doctor felt that the meetings tended to be handled quite sensitively and that young people tended to be asked in to contribute at

the end if they wish and that this happened more so now than was the case previously.

The Educational Psychologist felt that the degree to which everyone was able to contribute in the meetings varied from meeting to meeting and school to school, but that, in terms of the meetings the Educational Psychologist had attended, the young people had had a lot of experience of participating in meetings, and were therefore well able to contribute in them.

SALT 1 made a positive comment about changes to the meetings. The therapist felt that the meetings had changed to focus more on what the young person wanted, giving the example of the use of 'talking mats' to enable the young person to say what they wanted if they had limited verbal communication skills. These, SALT 1 went on to say, were also used at yearly reviews so that the young person can become used to them. SALT 1 then made it clear that the wishes of the young person are taken on board but that the parent made the choices if the young person had severe and profound learning difficulties. SALT 1 felt that the parent was supported to come to terms with no longer having all the support of the school and adjusting to what comes next.

The Careers Adviser referred to specific legislative changes
*“...continuity has got better due to legislation e.g. the 2005
 16+ learning choices agenda and the 2005 ASL Act: these
 create a duty for us to track young people all the way
 through [from school to post-school]...”*. (Careers Adviser,
 2010 interviews)

The Careers Adviser felt that prior to the legislation,
 continuity of support *“...used to be up to individual advisers
 more...except those with severe learning difficulties: [the
 Careers Adviser] felt that Careers Advisers couldn’t offer
 much in these cases and that it was more the responsibility
 of a Social Work care manager...”*.

Two of the 2010 professionals, however, felt that the transition
 meeting and planning system has deteriorated in the years
 following the Act. The Careers Adviser, for example, felt that
*“...meetings [have] got worse since FNA ceased...reviews
 used to be much more organised...knew when they were
 coming up...the young person did not slip through the net...not
 as many reviews now...”*

The Careers Adviser went on to say that *“...Social Work may
 not be involved...even [a young person with] significant ASN
 might not have a review...”* (Careers Adviser, 2010 interviews).

One of the Social Workers said this of the old FNA system:
"...Future Needs [is] defunct but now sorely missed...nothing has really replaced it...transition meetings don't really happen...if they do happen Social Work may not be involved..." (Social Worker 2, 2010 interviews).

The Social Worker referred to the need for more communication aids from the Speech and Language Therapy service due to the fact that the child may not be able to contribute as much as they might wish due to communication gaps.

5.4.2 Minutes in 2010

5.4.2.1 Context

According to the post-Act minutes, a range of professionals were present at the meetings as in the 'pre-Act' phase. As before, education professionals predominate in the minutes.

A new type of Social Work professional is mentioned: the 'transitions Social Worker'. There is no direct evidence of the presence of this type of post in other Scottish LAs. However, a

search of the internet produces numerous examples of this type of Social Work post being advertised in the UK.

According to one advertisement for a post in London, the post requires the successful candidate to work “...*with young people from the age of 16 years...* [in order to make the] ... *transition into adulthood for people with a disability a positive process...*” (Source: London Borough of Waltham Forest advertised post: <https://recruitwalthamforest.jp.co.uk/vacancies/view/1297>). It is of course not possible to state that all such posts with this title encompass the same duties, but there may be parallels between this post and the post mentioned in the minutes.

In only one of the post-Act meetings was the young person definitely present. In fact, this young person (YP5) made a presentation at the meeting with the help of classmates. However, even if not physically present, the young people had involvement in other meetings. For example, the parents of YP7 had been shown a ‘PowerPoint’ prepared by YP7 prior to the meeting, describing what YP7 looked forward to doing when they left school. It was unclear whether this had been done independently or with the Teacher in school. YP6 had also prepared a ‘PowerPoint’ for the review meeting, which described likes and dislikes. Given that the young people were not present at any of the pre-Act meetings, the use of

‘PowerPoint’ presentations in these post-Act cases arguably made these meetings more young person-centred. Parents appeared to be present at most, if not all of the post-Act meetings.

5.4.2.2 Perceived purpose

In the post-Act minutes, the post-school options fell broadly into two categories: what the young people were (possibly) going to do post-school and where they were going to live, together with how their needs might be supported. The options for the post-Act phase young people (YP4, YP5, YP6 and YP7) are shown in Table 5.6:

Table 5.6: Post-school occupation, accommodation and support possibilities (post- Act).

	Post-school occupation possibilities	Post-school accommodation and support possibilities
YP4 (post-Act)	College Residential farm course	Supported living options <i>"A care manager will be allocated..."</i>
YP5 (post-Act)	Work placement College Another 'centre'	Not mentioned
YP6 (post-Act)	College (computers?) Work placement (community newspaper?)	Not mentioned
YP7 (post-Act)	College (and discussion of post-college options)	Not mentioned

5.4.2.3 Perceived effectiveness

If one of the main aims of the meetings was to discuss post-school options for the young people, then in that respect there seems to be a lessening of the effectiveness of the meetings post-Act. Within the limitations of this study (i.e. the minutes analysed derived from only one school and so cannot be generalised to transition meeting minutes elsewhere) the table seems to show a diminishing of options for post-Act post-school occupations and accommodation compared to those in the pre-Act period. For example, the *'Careers Scotland Key Worker'* mentioned in the pre-Act minutes is not mentioned in the post-Act minutes. This may be due to changes in Careers Scotland provision (now Skills Development Scotland). As stated, the

Careers Adviser (2010 interviews) referred to '*gaps in provision*' at the 16-18 year stage. This might include gaps in Careers Advice provision. In particular, the pre-Act phase minutes seem to show more options in terms of post-school occupations for the young people. However, this could be because the meetings focussed on what the young people had identified themselves as options rather than what might be available more generally.

5.5 Discussion

5.5.1 Discussion: 2004 interviews

Some of the responses of parents and professionals in the 2004 interviews seem to convey a sense of unease. Words like "*daunting*" are used. The comments of Teacher 1 were particularly interesting. Teacher 1 appeared to have built up a relationship with this particular parent to the point where the parent was comfortable about 'opening up' regarding her feelings about the meeting. The parent seemed to be willing to speak to one professional, whom the parent knows personally to some degree, but the same parent seemed to feel much less empowered to speak confidently when faced by a number of professionals (possibly including Teacher 1). Such individualised support from such a 'link' professional might make it

unnecessary for these parents to face what Tisdall (1996) describes as a 'trial by horseshoe' of professionals.

The following graphic (Figure 5.1) illustrates Tisdall's concept:

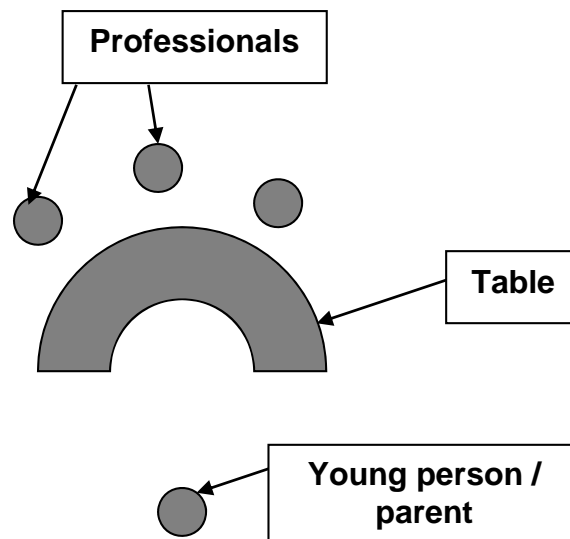


Figure 5.1: Tisdall's 'trial by horseshoe'

Some professionals felt that the FNA took place too soon (Careers Adviser, Physiotherapist 2, Social Worker 1 and OT). It is possible to imagine the circumstances of the young person changing between the meeting and the point where they actually leave school, rendering the outcomes of the meeting less relevant. For example, a young person discussing college options with a view to a career in catering at the age of 14 may, 4 years later, have changed their mind completely and may decide that they wish to join the armed forces. However, following the FNA meeting at age 14, annual leavers' meetings took place to review plans. This enabled professionals to take account of any changes in the young person's views or wishes.

One potential barrier to the success of a transition meeting might be the lack of feedback about the outcomes of previous meetings. In other words, how do the professionals at these meetings know whether the meeting will indeed lead to the desired outcomes? If there is no such 'feedback loop', as Doctor 1 stated (2004 interviews), it seems less easy to say that the meetings can be 'effective'.

One important recurring theme in the interview responses from 2004 was the sense, from the perspective of some parents/carers and young people, that a meeting involving a

large number of professionals could be rather 'daunting'. While attending a meeting at a school would be natural and comfortable for many parents and young people, for some being faced by professionals and paperwork (and sometimes possibly professional 'jargon') might be less comfortable).

5.5.2 Discussion: 2004 minutes

As stated, the 2004 minutes referred to discussions about a range of post-school options. What the minutes cannot show, crucially, is whether any of these options were in fact realised for the young people, and if they were happy and satisfied in their post-school destination, whatever that might be. One of the interesting features of the 'pre-Act' minutes is that a number of them seem to show a large number of professionals attending some of the meetings (e.g. 6 for YP1 and YP3; 7 for YP2). Despite the large numbers of professionals at some of the meetings, the Doctor always gives apologies and is never present. Also of interest is the fact that, despite the large numbers of professionals at some of these meetings, the young people themselves are not present (although their parents are). Thus, it is perhaps questionable how 'young person centred' these meetings can have been and to what extent they can genuinely have represented the wishes of the young people rather than those of their families or of the professionals who

have worked with them. Another noteworthy feature of these minutes is the 'aspirational' nature of the data about the desired post-school destinations for the young people. A large range of options seem to be on offer, from 'college' to a 'hospital placement'. However, the data in the minutes does not show whether any of these options have been realised; there is, in short, no 'feedback loop' in the documents.

5.5.3 Discussion: 2010 interviews

Echoing comments by McConkey (cf2002), who refers to the need, on occasion, for collaboration to be obligatory in order to work, Social Worker 3 referred to a Social Work structure whereby children's and adult teams had quarterly meetings to discuss transition issues. Interestingly, in this case a Social Work team that had been integrated had been de-integrated into children's and adult services. The quarterly meetings were seen as a structure that maintained strong collaborative links between the two.

The data from the interviews seem to show a lessening of clarity in terms of who experiences a meeting. In contrast to the 'pre-Act' period, when a planning meeting would take place for all those who had a RON, the definition of who has an ASN and therefore will experience a meeting seems less clear and seems

to be decided at a local level. Also, there are references in the 2010 interviews to actions not being carried out following meetings unless they are 'statutory' (Social Worker 1). In other words, if the action point is a statutory requirement it will be carried out; if not, it may not be.

There also seems to be a recurring suggestion that Social Work is a 'key' profession at this transition point – that they are a service which can 'get things done'. The need for a 'ink' person also recurs in the comments of the professionals. However, although there seem to be fewer meetings now, the meetings that do take place seem to be more young person centred.

5.5.4 Discussion: 2010 minutes

The more recent 'post-Act' minutes seem to show a slightly more 'young person centred' approach in the meetings, although the data sample is small. For example, although a young person was only present at one of these meetings (as opposed to 'none' in the earlier minutes), the views of absent young people were represented in various ways. Technology is being used to do so: the example of 'PowerPoint' presentations is given. As stated the minutes also seem to show a diminishing of options in the 'post-Act' phase as opposed to the 'pre-Act' but, again, the data

sample is small and so it is not possible to say that this is the case elsewhere in the LA or Scotland.

5.6 Discussion (2004; 2010)

In some respects, the meetings do not seem to have changed greatly between 2004 and 2010. The meetings were all held in schools across both periods. They were chaired, in the main, by education professionals. In fact, as stated, in 2004, 2 professionals (Doctor 1 and Physiotherapist 2) commented upon the perceived 'ownership' of the meetings by education, saying that the meetings seemed to be focused upon education and educational issues, rather than other aspects of the young persons' needs. Also across both periods, professionals, parents and the young people might all be present at the meetings.

However, one apparent and important change is the apparent diminishing frequency of meetings post-Act. Despite the requirement in legislation ('the Act') that LAs should consult with other agencies, with the young person and with their parents/carers at the school to post-school transition point, there seemed to be fewer meetings in the post-Act period than there were in the pre-Act (FNA) period.

It also seems to be the case that, post-Act, some young people, even with significant needs, did not experience a meeting at all (Careers Adviser, 2010 interviews). In addition, the fact that there appear to be fewer meetings post-Act suggests that there may be young people with ASN who would benefit from transition planning or meetings but who do not experience them. There seem to be a number of possible explanations for the reduction in the numbers of meetings. One is possibly the 'muddier' definition of who is entitled to a meeting under the banner of 'ASN'. Previously there seemed to be greater clarity in that all young people with a record of needs experienced the FNA meeting. Now, given the very broad definition of ASN, it seems, arguably, to be up to individuals in different areas to decide whose needs warrant a meeting and whose do not.

The perceived purpose of the meetings from the perspective of the professionals seems broadly similar across both periods. The professionals talked of highlighting what needs to be done at the meetings and of reducing the concerns and worries of the parents as the time when their child leaves the 'shelter' of the school-system draws closer.

In both 2004 and 2010, the professionals talked about making contact with adult services and of helping the families to get to know a new set of professionals. The desirability of a 'link'

person to help guide the young person and their family through the transition process was also mentioned in both periods (e.g. Careers Adviser, 2004 & 2010 interviews), although there seems to be little evidence of their presence. However, the 'transition co-ordinators' referred to by Teacher 2 (2010 interviews) may fulfil this role, although it is not clear how widespread this role is, nor to which agency these co-ordinators belong. There is a great deal of support in research literature for this type of role to support this transition (cf Morris, 2002; Bellis, 2003; Bangser, 2008; Jindal-Snape, 2012). Indeed, such a person, like the Personal Advisers described by Mittler (2007) could provide guidance for the young person through the complexities of transition. New Scottish legislation (the Children and Young People Act (Scotland) 2014), as stated, includes references to a 'named person' for every child in Scotland.

Three points about the role of the 'named person' are raised in this new Act that could have a bearing on the role of a 'link' person at this transition point. The 'named person', the Act states, might be involved in,

- “(i) advising, informing or supporting the child or young person, or a parent of the child or young person,
- (ii) helping the child or young person, or a parent of the child or young person, to access a service or support, or
- (iii) discussing, or raising, a matter about the child or young person with a service provider or relevant authority...” (2014, p.12)

At the time of writing this thesis, it is not yet clear whether this role could or should equate to the ‘link’ professional referred to in the context of ASN transitions, but, in time, this may become clearer.

As stated, while some professionals talked about a ‘link’ person either a professional or a family member (or friend), others talked about one agency being ‘key’ (Social Work tended to be the agency mentioned – e.g. Doctor 2, 2004 interviews); still others talked about collective responsibility in the meetings (e.g. Social Worker 1, 2010 interviews). These differing viewpoints can be summarized visually in the following graphic (Figure 5.2):



Figure 5.2 the 'spectrum of responsibility' at transition

The professionals saw one of the purposes of transition meetings and planning as making contact with adult services to help to guide the young person to their desired destinations. Figure 5.2 clearly illustrates that there was a range of views amongst the professionals about how this should be done, whether individually or collectively.

Across both periods, a lingering sense of a 'gap in service' for young people aged between 16 and 18 remains once 'school-level' services have withdrawn and before adult services have fully engaged (e.g. Doctors 1 & 2; SALT 1). Overall, again across both periods, the professionals seemed to share a common understanding of the factors that contribute to an 'effective' transition meeting. Most used the words important, invaluable and essential to describe the meetings and spoke of the effectiveness of the meetings in terms of sharing of

information and identifying what needed to be done and by whom.

However, none of the professionals seemed to talk of effectiveness in the sense of the meetings leading to the desired outcomes expressed by the young people themselves or their families. Indeed, Physiotherapist 1 (2004) suggested that the meetings were not good at leading to the desired outcomes. In the 2004 period, Doctor 1 mentioned the lack of feedback from the post-school stage about whether the young people have successfully found a place on a college course, or a place in supported employment, to give two examples. Of course, for the young person to achieve the desired destination can be only one aspect of transition planning: there are many others (e.g. discussing post-school options and reducing the 'worry' of transition).

It is worth stating that this point about a 'feedback loop', or rather in this case the lack of one, at this transition point recurs in transitions literature. In much of this literature, the idea of 'data-tracking' is promoted (Bellis, 2003; Mittler, 2007; Bangser, 2008), whereby the post-school destinations of young people with ASN are recorded and fed back to those involved in the transition meeting system. In British Columbia, Canada, for example, the British Columbia Council on Admissions and

Transfer (BCCAT) describe a data tracking system for students using a 'personal education number' (PEN) supported by the Ministry of Education. This allowed post-secondary institutions to share student data with schools in order to monitor their progress from one setting to another (BCCAT, 2008).

One professional saw the pre-Act FNA meetings as particularly effective and felt that that they 'would be sorely missed' (Social Worker 2, 2010 interviews) Another agreed and felt that the post-Act meeting system had deteriorated (Careers Adviser, 2010 interviews) However, still others (Social Worker 1 and SALT 1, 2010 interviews) felt that those meetings which did take place, although fewer in number, were more young person centred. Doctor 2, in the 2004 interviews, had expressed the hope that the transition meeting system would become, '*less formal*' and '*more of a process*' following the introduction of the Act. It is difficult to know whether this is the case, but it does seem that, in those meetings which take place in the post-Act period, there is evidence of the young people taking more control of the meetings by using PowerPoint presentations relating to their post-school wishes, for example. The evidence of the post-Act minutes seems to back up this assertion, given that there is greater mention of young people being involved than was the case in the pre-Act minutes. As previously stated, none of the 3 young people were present at their pre-Act FNA

meetings. Three out of 4 were present in the post-Act phase and PowerPoint presentations were made by or on behalf of all of them. Clearly, this is a very small sample but the comments of the professionals suggest that post-Act meetings are becoming more young person centred also.

If the meetings have indeed become (or are becoming) more young person centred since the introduction of the Act, other features of the meetings could still be seen as potential barriers to the effectiveness of the meetings. One such feature is the perception by some professionals that the 'right' people are not always contacted or present at the meetings (Physiotherapist; Educational Psychologist, 2010 interviews). Across both periods, the variety of responses to the question about what the professionals saw as their role seems to illustrate the differing perspectives and roles among the professions represented. For example, Social Work seemed to have the most direct post-school role with the young people, via their adult services team. Some of the health professionals, like the Physiotherapist and the Speech and Language Therapist, were involved only if another agency referred (or re-referred) the young person to them. Some professions, like, arguably, Social Work again, were seen as providing direct support in the post-school setting. Others, like Educational Psychology, were seen as providing indirect support. Despite the perceived 'crucial' nature of the

Social Work profession at this transition point, the apparent frequent absence of Social Work professionals from those few meetings that do take place in the post-Act period is notable. If Social Work at this stage are the 'people who can get things done' for the young person, the question of what the purpose of the meeting is if they are absent arises. As far back as 1996, Tisdall, cited earlier, wondered how appropriate a multi-agency meeting with a large number of professionals was. To this could be added the point that there may be 'key' people in these meetings whose absence dilutes the effectiveness of the meetings.

If one possible definition of an 'effective' meeting is whether the participants all feel at ease and all feel equally able to contribute, then the meetings appear to be becoming places where the young people and parents/carers feel more at ease. The words 'anxious' and 'daunted' were used to describe some young people and parents in the meetings in the pre-Act period. As shown in Table 5.4 and elsewhere, 6 professionals (Social Worker 1, Doctors 1 & 2, OT, Teacher 1 and Careers Adviser) all referred to young people and/or parents/carers feeling unsure in the meetings in some respect. Having said this, in the pre-Act period Social Worker 1 also said that the school was a place for the parents to come and that the parents seemed to be happy to visit the school and to attend meetings there. In contrast to the

pre-Act period, in the post-Act period only 1 professional (Social Worker 1 again) refers to parents/carers feeling unsure in meetings.

In addition, the large amounts of paperwork which the parents were asked to assimilate in the meetings was mentioned (although only in relation to the 2004 interviews). In the 2004 period, the meetings were said to be set too early (OT); conversely, in 2010, the meetings were said to be set too late (Educational Psychologist). As stated earlier, the 'Act' requires an education authority to seek information about the provision of other agencies at least 12 months before the young person leaves school. The key phrase in the above may be, '*at least*'. In other words, it may be that education authorities are waiting until the last year of the young person's school-career before beginning the process of communicating with other agencies. In the 2010 period, some professionals (OT; SALT 1) felt that the flagging up of some young people to their services by other agencies was 'variable' at the paediatric to adult transition stage.

In contrast, the professionals seemed mainly positive about the continuity of support in terms of their own service's school to post-school provision in the post-Act period. Where the comments about continuity were largely negative in the pre-Act period (the OT and the two Physiotherapists used the word

‘poor’ for example), both continuity of support and links other agencies were perceived to have improved since the Act was introduced. Legislation (16+ Learning Choices and the Act itself), in the case of the Careers Advice Service, was seen as important in terms of ensuring continued support and involvement.

The minutes of the meetings seem also to show discussions of post-school options in both 2004 and 2010, with similar options like college and supported employment being possibilities in both periods. There is a suggestion, from the post-Act minutes, that there were fewer post-school options available in this later period, but this may simply be a reflection of the way these minutes were recorded or that the young people were clear about what they wanted as a post-school destination.

In summary, it is possible to suggest some apparent features of transition planning and meetings in ‘post-Act Scotland’:

- There appear to be fewer post-Act meetings than in the pre-Act (FNA) phase and the FNA meetings are missed by some professionals
- Those meetings that do take place appear to be more young person centred and young people and families seem to feel more ‘at ease’ in the meetings
- The desirability of a ‘link’ person recurs in the interview responses (both periods)

- There remains a perception of a 'gap in service' by some professionals at this transition point
- The professionals have different viewpoints about whether there should be individual, agency or collective responsibility at transition. 'Individual' could refer to a professional or a family member or friend; 'agency' is seen by many professionals as equating with Social Work; Social Work professionals themselves advocate a 'collective responsibility'

In the next chapter (Chapter 6), the author will describe a case study in which students at a college, plus some of their parents/carers and some of the professionals who work with the students were interviewed about their experiences of school to post-school transition.

Chapter 6 College case study (Study 3)

6.1 Introduction

The author designed a case study in order to explore the experiences of young people with ASN who had actually undertaken the school to post-school transition. The case study approach is defined as a way to, “...illuminate a particular situation, to get a close (i.e., in-depth and first-hand) understanding of it” (Yin, 2004, p.3). Yin goes on to say that, “...the case study method helps you to make direct observations and collect data in natural settings.”

By creating a case study in which the ‘case’ in question was a further education college, and by making contact with some of the main stakeholders in the school to college transition process, the author hoped to provide another perspective on the school to post-school transition process. The participants in the case study, in addition to the young people themselves, were some of the parents / carers of the young people, some of the college professionals who worked with them and some of the staff at the schools from which the young people had recently come.

The college is an example of the 'next stage' of the process, once the young people had 'moved on' from school. Like Studies 1 and 2, Study 3 samples the views of a number of professionals who are involved in the school to post-school transition. What makes the 'Case Study' different from Studies 1 and 2 is that the voices of some young people with ASN and their parents / carers are heard directly.

6.2 Methodology

6.2.1 Participants

Figure 6 shows the participants in the college case study: students, parents / carers, college professionals and school professionals. Table 6.1 provides more detail about the sample.

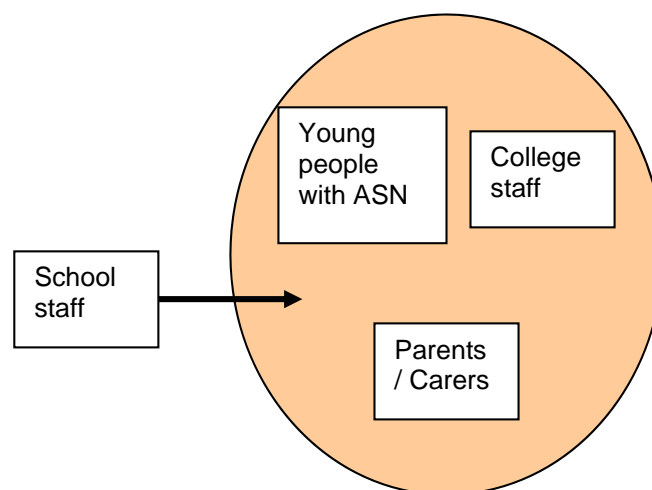


Figure 6: The participants in Study 3: the 'college case study'

Table 6.1: Participants in the college case study

Participant	Young person with ASN	Parent / carer	School professional	College professional
Number	9	4	3	2

6.2.2 Data collection methods

Two methods were used to gather data for the case study. Firstly, interviews (either face-to-face or telephone), were undertaken with the students, college professionals and parents / carers. The following table illustrates the types of interviews used and the rationale for each (Table 6.2):

Table 6.2: Types of interviews used and the rationale for each.

Type of interview	Sample	Rationale
Face-to-face with visual posters	Students (n=9)	The author felt that face-to-face interviews offered the opportunity to gain the fullest picture of the young people's experiences: the words of the students were recorded in the context of their non-verbal responses (e.g. their body-language) and the setting in which the interviews took place (the college café)
Face-to-face	College professionals (n=2)	The college professionals were available for interview prior to or following the student interviews: the author was able to ask questions in various informal settings (e.g. over tea in the café), building up a relationship with them over a number of visits
Telephone	Parents / carers (n=4)	The author felt that telephone interviewing would be the most practical way to contact parents due to variability of their availability

The face-to-face interviews with the students were also video-recorded (and later transcribed) and their visual 'discussion posters' were photographed to provide a more detailed record of the meetings.

The 'discussion poster' (Appendix 5) provided a positive focal point for the meetings with the students and a non-verbal way of recording information about their transition experiences. The young people were asked to recall who had attended their transition meeting (or meetings). The author then placed colour-coded 'silhouettes' on the poster (red for Education staff, blue for Careers Advisers and so on). The young people were then asked to place a counter on a rating scale on the poster to indicate how they felt about being at college. As stated, the posters were photographed after the silhouettes had been placed accordingly and after each student had placed their counters on them.

Secondly, an online survey like that used in Study 1 (the National Survey) was devised. This latter approach was used to gather data from school professionals in 3 schools near the college from which the young people had come. This approach was used because, although the sample size was small, the author wasn't sure how big the response would be (and therefore felt that interviewing a potentially large sample of

school professionals would not be practical). The questions used in this second online survey were effectively identical to those used for the national online survey reported in Chapter 4 (Appendix 6).

6.2.3 Sample

As Table 6.1 shows, data was gathered from 9 young people, 3 school professionals, 4 parents and 2 college staff. To begin the interview process, the author contacted the college and made contact with the ASN manager there. In preliminary discussions with the ASN manager, the author described his research and his interest in school to post-school transitions for young people with ASN. In further discussions, the author and the ASN manager agreed that about 9 students would be a manageable number to interview and a reasonably representative sample of the total number of students with ASN who were enrolled at the college at the time (n:28). Accordingly, the ASN manager identified 9 students with ASN who would be willing to participate in the author's research. All 9 had transitioned from school to college a few months earlier. From discussions with the college ASN manager and a tutor, the author was able to build up a 'picture' of the various needs the young people had. These needs ranged from cognitive difficulties to physical needs (one young person, for example,

used a wheelchair and a number of young people had some difficulties with spoken communication / understanding of spoken language). Some of the young people, according to the college staff, had attended a school nearby with ASN provision, whereas others had attended local secondary schools.

After further discussions between the manager and the students, the 9 students agreed to take part. Later discussions with the ASN manager helped to identify 4 parents who would be willing to answer questions about their child's transition experiences. The ASN manager had discussed the author's research with the students prior to the author's visits and they had all agreed to participate. The author was not keen to use a highly structured interview process with the students where the same questions and format would be used with each. Rather, he was keen to use a semi-structured approach in order to talk to the 9 students in the study about how they felt about college and their college courses. He also wished to find out what their recollections of transition planning and meetings at school were, if any.

The college professionals who were interviewed were the ASN manager who was the author's 'contact person' throughout the whole process and a tutor. The tutor was suggested to the

author as a possible candidate for interview as she had worked extensively with the young people in question. Again, their interviews were semi-structured in that the author asked them questions about their experiences and views of the transition process and made written notes accordingly, rather than working from a formally scripted series of interview questions. These were later typed up to become part of the available data for the case study.

6.2.4 Data analysis

Like Studies 1 and 2 (discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively), a thematic analysis approach (cf Black and Ubbes, 2009) was used to analyse the data in Study 3. The interviews with the stakeholders were typewritten before being colour coded and sorted into themes. Also as before, the data were organised into three main themes:

- Context
- Perceived purpose
- Perceived effectiveness

6.2.5 Ethics

As with Studies 1 and 2, ethical approval was applied for to UREC. UREC approval was granted on the 7th September 2012 (UREC 11085, Appendix 3). Following approval, the Principal of the college and the Head of Service (Education) gave their permission for the college and school professionals respectively to be approached regarding their participation in the research project. All of the students were informed in writing as well as verbally that their participation was voluntary and that their responses would be treated with full confidentiality. The informed consent of the students and their permission for the use of photographs and videos was obtained (Appendix 17). Verbal consent was obtained also from the professionals and parents / carers who were involved in the study. It was made clear in the participant information sheet that data from the interviews would be stored securely and then destroyed once the study was complete (Appendix 18).

6.3 Results

6.3.1 Results: School professionals' perspectives

Table 6.3 provides an overview of the school professionals' responses in terms of the context and perceived purpose of the meetings:

Table 6.3 Professionals' experiences of transition planning based upon on-line questionnaire data

Job Title	Frequency of meeting	Location of meeting	Attendance at meeting?	Perceived purpose of meeting
Head Teacher	Annually	In the school	Relevant professionals, the parents / carers and the young person.	Collection of information from teaching staff and any support staff involved with the young person, the arrangement of a date, place and time for the meeting, invitations sent out to all relevant people including the young person and their parents/carers.
Deputy Head Teacher	6 monthly or monthly as, "...a key transition time approaches".	In the school	Relevant professionals, the parents / carers and the young person.	Consulting with other staff to get reports and consulting with the young person to ascertain what he/she hopes to do.
Principal Teacher Support for Learners	The frequency of the meetings depended on, "...the level of need..." - there might be only one individualised meeting; however, more meetings might take place with increasing frequency as the transition time approached.	In the school	Professionals and parents / carers were always present, the young person attended, "...only as appropriate..."	Contacting partners, exploring options and making visits.

6.3.1.1 Context

The school professionals involved in the college case study were a Head Teacher from a school with additional support provision, a Deputy Head Teacher and a Principal Teacher Support for Learning (from 2 different secondary schools). Like the professionals in the national survey (Study 1, Chapter 4) and the longitudinal study (Study 2, Chapter 5), these professionals were involved in transition planning and meetings with young people like the college students in this study.

6.3.1.2 Perceived Purpose

The 3 professionals (Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher and Principal Teacher Support for Learners) in the college case study spoke about the ‘purpose’ of the transition planning in terms of jointly considering post-school options for the young people. The Deputy Head Teacher, for example, as Table 6.2 shows, talks about ascertaining what the young person wants to do; the PT support for learners refers to “...*contacting partners, exploring options and making visits...*”

(PT Support for Learners, 2012 online survey)

The professionals also spoke about the involvement of the young person in the meetings. The Head Teacher answered

that the young person at the last meeting they attended was not involved due to “...*significant difficulties...*” (Head Teacher, 2012 online survey)

The Deputy Head Teacher described how the young people were asked for their views in the meeting. This included what they thought would be helpful to them and then the young people gave their final agreement and approval to the plan. The Principal Teacher Support for Learning simply said that the young people “...*took part in the discussion...*” (PT Support for Learners, 2012 online survey).

The Deputy Head Teacher added that talking mats might be used to support the young person’s communication in the meeting.

The professionals were also asked how the views of the young people were represented if they were not involved in the meeting. They gave 3 examples of how an absent young person’s views had been represented in the past:

- Views being represented by the parent/ carer
 - The use of the results of the ‘Person Centred Planning’ meeting that could be brought along
 - The views of the young person could be delivered verbally by anyone they nominated

For the professionals, therefore, the purpose of the transition planning and meetings seemed to be to determine what the post-school destinations of the young people were and to begin to make contacts with ‘relevant’ adults who would be involved with the young people at the next stage.

6.3.1.3 Perceived Effectiveness

The 3 professionals talked of ‘effectiveness’ not just in terms of the outcomes of the planning and meetings. They also talked in terms of the meetings being a positive forum for discussion, where everyone was given an equal opportunity to contribute. However, the PT Support for Learning stated that meetings were positive and fruitful only “...*if Social Work were engaged...*” (PT Support for Learning, 2012 online survey)

6.3.2 Results: Young people’s perspective

6.3.2.1 Context

From the data gathered, it was also possible to build up a picture of what happens at this transition point from the perspective of the young people and their families who have recently experienced the transition to college. As shown in Table 6.4, most of the young people recalled being involved in

transition meetings and planning of some kind at school. An example of an interview script is included as Appendix 19. As previously stated, examples of the draft and final discussion posters the author used with the young people to aid discussion are included as Appendices 4 and 5. Table 6.4 shows that the young people' transition planning and meeting experiences seem to have been quite varied. However, they all apparently experienced some sort of transition meeting (or meetings) and/or a phased transition to college whereby the young people would attend the college for a day or so per week while still at school. Please note that, as previously stated in Chapter 3 (Table 3.2), 'S1' to 'S9' in Table 6.4 refers to the 9 students who were interviewed.

Table 6.4 Young people's transition experiences based upon interview and poster data

Young person	Transition meeting? Please note that the italicised words are those of the young people; the others have been added by the author.	Other transition arrangements?
S1	Experienced meetings " <i>a couple of times</i> " at school with " <i>Head of ___ Support</i> " plus another Teacher from the school.	None mentioned
S2	Experienced meetings " <i>a couple of times</i> " at school with " <i>Head of ___ Support</i> " plus another Teacher from the school.	"...[ASN Manager also came] <i>down a couple of times to talk to the class...</i> "
S3	Met " <i>a few Teachers...the Head Teacher...</i> "	None mentioned
S4	" <i>Didn't talk to anyone...</i> "	Spent one day per week at college in 4 th year
S5	Met with ASN Manager, Social Worker, parent and the Head Teacher from S5's school	Spent one day per week at college in 4 th year
S6	None mentioned	" <i>I left in 5th year and I went to college on Monday and Thursday...</i> "
S7	Parents, some Teachers and ASN Manager had met together while S7 was still in the 4 th year of secondary school	None mentioned
S8	<i>Met with "3 friends..."</i>	None mentioned
S9	" <i>Quite a few friends</i> " and the school Careers Adviser.	Visits to college while still at school and visits by Lecturers from college to school

6.3.2.2 Perceived Purpose

In the responses of the students there are some clues about what they thought the purpose of the transition planning and

meetings was. For example, the author talked to S1 about thoughts about post-school options at the end of secondary school. S1's response suggested that the move to college was triggered more by negative feelings about school than as a positive choice. Nor did S1 seem to have had many other options at that point. The author asked the student: "*Did you have some other ideas about what you wanted to do or was it just college?*"

S1 responded, "*I didnae hae a clue...I didnae want tae bide at school... [saying that school was] ...boring...!*" S2, in response to the same question, said that, "*We talked about the courses and how we'd get support if we went to college...trying to encourage us to go to college...*"

The responses of S1 and S2 seem to illustrate how some of the young people saw the transition planning and preparation process in a different way from the professionals. For many of the professionals, the purpose of the meetings seems to have been in part to discuss post-school options with the young people. However, for S1 and S2, for example, there does not seem to have been a discussion of different post-school options with a range of professionals.

At their transition meetings, college seems to have been the only option 'on the table'. S3 replied that some Teachers and a friend talked about "... *what they were going to learn at school [college?]*..." (Student S3, 2012 interviews).

S3 felt "...*a bit nervous about moving up to college... [and] ...about meeting [the ASN manager]...but we talked about what we were going to do...he came to school...to sign forms...*"

Another young person (S5) described a transition meeting. At the meeting, S5 stated that they had discussed how "... *to get to college... transport and stuff...*" (S5, 2012 interviews). The college ASN manager had also been present at this meeting and also, according to S5, the "...*work-experience quine* ('woman') ...*organiser of work experience...*" (Careers Adviser)

For all 9 of the students, only college as a post-school destination seems to have been discussed. The purpose of the transition planning and meetings for most of the young people in the case study seems to have been to pave the way for them to go to college, rather than exploring a range of options of which college might have been but one. However, it is important to re-state that the entire sample of 9 students were at college at the time of their interviews.

6.3.2.3 Perceived effectiveness

The young people appeared to feel that the transition planning and meetings held on their behalf had been effective in terms of their move from school to college. They spoke, for example, of being 'helped' by different people to prepare for the move from school to college in different, practical ways. Some, for example, experienced visits to their schools by the ASN manager. Others visited the college prior to beginning their courses.

Another point to be made about the effectiveness of the meetings from the perspective of the young people is that they all, without exception, spoke positively about their college courses, speaking enthusiastically about preferring college to school.

Some of the young people stated that they did not know what type of work they would like to do once they had left college. Finally, it is important to state that, when they were asked to 'rate' their transition to college, using the 'smiley face' rating scale on the discussion posters (Appendix 5), all 9 young people responded positively. They were also asked, by the author, at the end of their interviews, once the 'ipad' device had been switched off, whether they had found the posters useful and they all replied positively, saying that they had enjoyed moving the

coloured silhouettes and counters around and that they had found the poster to be 'fun' and that they liked the 'colours' and 'cartoons'.

6.4 Results: Parents

Table 6.5 summarises the parents' recollections of attendance at transition meetings for their children:

Table 6.5 Parents' transition experiences based upon interview data

Parent	Transition meeting?	Other transition arrangements?
Parent of S6	Attended " <i>quite a few</i> " meetings at S6's secondary school involving school staff and the ASN manager. The parent felt that everything was " <i>explained well</i> " at these meetings and S6 and S6's parents were all able to put across their views.	Attended the college for a day a week in final year of school.
Parent of S7	Had not attended meetings but thought that S7 had.	Attended the college for a day a week in final year of school.
Parent of S8	Meeting at S8's school (a school with ASN provision) with the Head Teacher of the school and the ASN manager.	None mentioned.
Parent of S9	None	S9 attended some meetings with Guidance staff at school and the ASN Manager.

6.4.1 Context

For the parents / carers, the context differs slightly from that of their children, the students, and the professionals. The students experience the transition; the professionals help to plan and support it. The parents / carers by contrast, although involved in planning discussions and with the young people in the home are perhaps not as closely involved as the other stakeholders. As Table 6.5 shows, only 2 of the 4 parents (S6 and S8) had attended any transition meetings.

6.4.2 Perceived purpose

From the perspectives of the parents, the purpose of the transition planning and meetings seems to have been broadly similar to that of the young people themselves. For example, given that the parents attended transition planning meetings (Table 6.5), by doing so they were 'kept in the loop' about future plans and arrangements for their children.

6.4.3 Perceived effectiveness

The parent of S6 felt that transition arrangements prior to the move to college had been positive and effective. The parent felt that transition meetings had all been positive, with everyone being able to put across their views. In general, the parents also talked positively about being able to ask questions of the college professionals about the transition arrangements.

The only real difficulty the parent of S6 cited concerned 'escorts on buses'. She had wished for a 'responsible adult' to help S6 get on and off the college bus (as stated earlier, S6 uses a wheelchair). However, according to the parent, young people had been asked to carry out this role instead. She wondered if funding difficulties lay behind this arrangement. The only negative issues raised by the parent of S7 were that there were some difficulties with buses and transport from S7's home to college.

Similarly, S9's parent did say that S9 had been slightly apprehensive about travelling independently by bus there from S9's hometown. However, this apprehension was now in the

past and S9's parent talked of S9 now being much more confident and outgoing than had been the case at school.

From the perspective of the 'service-users', the young people and their parents, the transition arrangements, including meetings, do seem to have been 'effective' in that they all seemed to have settled into college after only a few months and all the young people seemed to be enjoying their courses. However, there does not seem to have been much discussion of other options apart from college for the young people and their families, even though the 3 professionals in the case study mention the discussions of other options and possibilities in their responses. Thus, for the young people, theirs was a positive transition, but a transition that appeared to lack options apart from one course at college. Some of the parents stated that the young people did not know what type of work they would like to do after they had left college.

6.5 Results: College Professionals

6.5.1 Context

Defining 'context' for the college professionals means considering their place and their role in the transition

experiences of the young people. The college ASN manager played a key role in these experiences. The ASN manager frequently visited the young people in their schools to begin the discussions about transition options and possible college courses. The tutor also spoke to the author about visiting some of the young people in their schools before they made the move to college. Clearly, the 'transition' (i.e. school to post-school) is the same for the college professionals as it is for the other stakeholders in the college case study. The college professionals, however, arguably 'saw' the transition in a slightly different way as they have not been directly involved in the school-level phase as directly as the others.

6.5.2 Perceived Purpose

Both the college ASN manager and the tutor spoke at length to the author about their experiences of the transition process as they saw it. The ASN manager, for example, saw the process in terms of building up and maintaining positive relationships with the neighbouring schools from which the young people had come. He described the process whereby he would visit the young people while they were still at school to outline the options for them at college: to provide an overview, for example, of the types of courses on offer and the type of support they would receive there. In addition, both members of staff talked of

meeting with and building up relations with the parents of the young people (and, of course, with the young people themselves) in the weeks and months leading up to the transition. They spoke about the need for the young people to see them as 'friendly faces' prior to the transition and thus to be seen as the 'contact' or 'link' staff for the young people in this regard.

It is perhaps worth reiterating that the ASN manager was considering only one 'option' for the young people (i.e. school to college), and the 'purpose' of the transition planning and meeting from his perspective, and from that of the tutor, was to 'pave the way' for this transition and to help to make it a success.

6.5.3 Perceived Effectiveness

From the perspective of the ASN manager, given that all the young people in the case study were young people who had already begun a college course, the transition planning could be said to have been effective in the sense that the young people had found a place in their desired setting: college. As stated, all 9 of the young people seemed to have settled positively into a course ('Towards Employment'). The ASN manager had also spent a great deal of time building up links with the schools from

which the young people had come. This included visiting the schools in person and meeting with the young people, as well as their Teachers and parents, prior to their transition to college. The ASN manager confirmed that the young people would spend part of their final school year at college to help them acclimatise to their new environment.

The ASN manager and the tutor saw the transition planning process in a positive light. As stated, they both saw that building up positive relations with schools, young people and parents helped to make the transition work more smoothly.

6.6 Discussion

In this case study, an attempt was made to sample the views of all the main stakeholders connected to 9 young people with ASN who had recently made the transition from secondary school to college. The young people had attended either local secondary schools or a nearby school with ASN provision. An attempt was made to sample the views of 'key' individuals who are involved in the lives of these young people: their parents / carers, school staff and college staff, as well as the view / experiences of the young people themselves.

The composition of the meetings seemed to vary from S8's reference to '3 friends' to the explicit reference by S5 to education and Social Work professionals being present. However, in the main, the data from the professionals agrees with that of the young people and parents in the sense that transition meetings do seem to take place in the schools involving professionals, the parents and, usually, the young people themselves, although they seemed to vary in their frequency. These responses seem to show that, even within one relatively small geographical area (i.e. schools within travelling distance of the local college) there is quite a high degree of variance of frequency of meetings. It seems that the schools determine how often the meetings should take place themselves, based in at least one case upon the needs of the young person.

For the school professionals the purpose of the transition planning process and the meetings in particular was to consider the post-school environment into which the young person was about to move and to make contact with representatives of adult services.

As stated, the perceived purpose of the transition planning and meetings for most of the young people in the case study seems to have been to pave the way for them to go to college, and only

college. The young people spoke of the ASN manager visiting them at school to tell them about college. They also spoke about visiting the college and perhaps dividing their time between school and college in their final year of school. This seems rather at odds with the planning and meetings described by the 3 school professionals, where different possibilities seem to be 'up for discussion'. In these discussions, ranges of options seem to be 'on the table' – college is one but so are different employment options and university. It is not clear whether this wider range of options were ever discussed with these students, or whether a decision was made that only college should be discussed with them. It may also be, of course, that the young people, as seems to be the case, only ever considered college as a post-school option. It was the place where their friends were going and they had received a positive impression of it from adults and peers.

For the parents of 4 of the young people, all but one (S9) had been involved in some sort of transition meeting. All of the parents (with the exception of S8) were also aware of some of the transition arrangements that had been in place for their children. Thus, in terms of the main stakeholders (young people and parents/carers) being involved in transition planning and meetings, the process to that extent can be said to have been effective.

Likewise, the school professionals in the online survey felt that the needs of the young people were taken account of in the school meetings (the use of 'talking mats' as a communication aid was mentioned, for example). Therefore, from the perspective of whether the meetings were inclusive, they also appear to have been effective. In only one case did the school professionals refer to a young person not being present at a meeting due to their ASN. In other cases, it seems that the young person might nominate a 'proxy' to speak on their behalf at a meeting. The young people who were interviewed all stated that they had only considered college as a post-school option, whereas the school professionals (in the online survey) had made it clear that some young people with ASN entered employment or university. Also, the young people interviewed were all following a course entitled 'Towards Employment', a course designed to prepare them for the world of work. However, it was not clear whether this course would in fact lead to employment for the young people. As already stated, some of the young people and parents stated that the young people did not know what type of work they would like to do. This suggests that a 'feedback loop' to inform service-providers (e.g. schools or, in this case, college) about whether their service-users have reached a desired destination after leaving them is desirable.

The 'feedback loop' concept is reflected in research (cf Bellis, 2003; Mittler, 2007; Bangser, 2008).

According to the young people, and the school professionals, it seems clear that a variety of adults were involved with their transition meetings. The young people spoke in quite general terms about who had been there, mentioning '*some Teachers*' for example. One individual, the 'ASN manager', seemed to provide a 'key' liaison role between the college and the local schools. The ASN manager was mentioned by a number of the young people as having visited their schools to talk about possible courses at college and how the transition would work. Here, the role of the ASN manager can be said to be that of the 'link' person, much advocated in research (cf Morris, 2002; Bellis, 2003; Bangser, 2008; Jindal-Snape, 2012).

The ASL Act did not seem to have made much difference to the transition process according to the professionals from the schools, although greater access to services and better planning were two examples of perceived improvements in the 'system' since the Act had become law.

Comparing the responses of parents and young people is interesting because it shows some discrepancies between their recollections of the transition process. For example, Tables 6.4

and 6.5 show that while S6 did not recall having attended any transition meetings, the parent of S6 referred to 'quite a few' meetings at S6's secondary school. Similarly, while the parent of S9 was not aware of any transition meetings having taken place, S9 referred to having met with 'friends' and the 'Careers Adviser'. These discrepancies show that the information provided by each party differed and the information had perhaps not been discussed between parent and child.

Also, again as stated, the young people had all settled well into college and were all enjoying their course within a few months of starting. The college staff therefore saw the evidence of successful transition in measurable terms, or so-called 'hard' outcomes (cf Kaehne & Beyer, 2008; 2009). The students and their families all spoke in (largely) positive terms about the move from school to college. Overall, the young people were very positive about college according to their comments and their placement of counters on the 'discussion posters'. The parents, in the main, agreed with this positive view. Some difficulties with transport to and from college were mentioned as an area of difficulty but college itself seemed entirely positive, from the parents' perspectives.

However, as the author suggested earlier, although the transition process seems to have been effective for the young

people, the 'effectiveness' of the transition planning was limited to a move from school to college only. No other options seem to have been 'on the table' for these young people. Was this, therefore, genuine transition planning when no choice of possible destinations seems to have been discussed? It is also worth stating that the professionals in Study 3 were considering the transition process in general for all students, whereas, for the young people, they were considering the meetings and planning which had taken place for them in particular. Thus, the perspectives of the young people could be said to be more personal, and that of the school professionals more general. Also, the author recognises that by focusing on students in college he has omitted the voices of other young people who might have moved on to other post-school destinations e.g. training providers.

In this chapter (6) and the Chapters 4 and 5, which preceded it, the author audited school to post-school transition experiences for young people from the perspectives of a range of stakeholders at both local and national levels. The viewpoints of professionals, parents / carers and young people were all gathered, using a range of methods. In the next chapter (Chapter 7), the author will discuss the overall findings from his 3 studies and relate these findings to previous research.

Chapter 7 Discussion and Conclusion

The author's aim in carrying out this research project was to shine a light on a particular phase in the lives of young people with ASN: the school to post-school transition. This transition is an example of a time when professionals collaborate together and also with parents / carers and young people. The author wanted to find out certain things over the course of the project. In his original research questions he asked:

1. What is the perception of the influence of changing legislation on post-school transition planning and preparation in Scotland in the context of inter-professional working and the participation of young people in the process?
2. What are the perspectives of the professionals who are involved in multi-agency transition meetings about the legislative changes and its impact on practice?
3. What are the experiences of young people with ASN and their families (and of the professionals who work with them) of post-school transition planning and preparation?

To do this he explored the views of professionals of transition planning and preparation in a Scotland-wide national survey. He also gathered data from professionals in a longitudinal study in one Scottish LA at two time points 6-years apart in 2004 and

2010, pre and post implementation of the Act. He also examined minutes of transition meetings during these two time points. Finally, he explored the views of young people and parents, as well as school and college staff of their transition experiences in a case study centred upon a further education college.

Throughout this thesis the author has tried to assist the reader by organising his data into the 3 themes of 'context', 'purpose' and 'effectiveness'. In Chapter 7, the author will do the same by drawing together findings from Chapter 2 (the literature review) and from each of his 3 studies (Chapters 4, 5 and 6). Table 7.1 summarises his key findings:

Table 7.1: Key findings organised into the 3 themes

Themes	'Pre-Act' phase	'Post-Act' phase
	FNA and RON derived from 1980 Education Act	The 'Act' of 2004 is introduced The definition of ASN changed Source: <u>Literature Review</u>
Context Historical context of collaborative planning for children and young people with ASN Post-school transition particularly difficult for young people with ASN Professional collaboration required Source: <u>Literature Review</u>	FNA meeting in school for young people with a RON – young person was not always present Source: <u>Pre-Act minutes</u>	'Review' meeting normally in school, but other informal interactions happening - these may be in the young person's home and may involve non-education professionals Source: <u>National Survey</u> Young person usually present at the meeting Source: <u>Post-Act minutes</u>; <u>National Survey</u>; <u>Longitudinal Study</u>
Purpose	Discuss post-school options (professionals and parents) Source: <u>Longitudinal Study</u>	Discuss post-school options (young person, professionals and parents) Source: <u>Longitudinal Study</u>; <u>National Survey</u>
Effectiveness	Meetings for every child with RON Source: <u>Literature Review</u> Professionals feel positive about collaboration Source: <u>Longitudinal Study</u>	Fewer transition meetings Source: <u>Longitudinal Study</u> Collaboration is perceived to have improved Source: <u>Longitudinal Study</u> Meetings began to become more young person centred 'post-Act' Source: <u>National Survey</u>; <u>Longitudinal Study</u>

Table 7.1 shows that significant changes seem to be taking place with regards to transition preparation and planning in Scotland. Collaboration between professionals does seem to be perceived to have improved (although the perception by

professionals across both periods seemed to paint a largely 'positive' view of their interactions amongst themselves and, generally, between themselves and young people and their families). The actual meetings seem to have changed also. There seems to be a greater presence of the young people themselves at the meetings and a greater sense of the 'control' of the meetings passing into the hands of the young people. This apparent greater empowerment of the young people connects to Scottish policy directives like GIRFEC (cf 2008). Additionally, while there appear to be fewer meetings 'post-Act' there seems to be an increase in the frequency of informal interactions and some of those are beginning to take place in non-school settings like the home and may involve non-education professionals.

There is a possible link between the apparent reduction in the numbers of post-Act meetings and the changing definition of 'ASN' brought about by the Act. One possible explanation for the perceived reduction in the numbers of meetings cited by the interviewees in the longitudinal study is the 'muddier' definition of who is entitled to a meeting under the banner of 'ASN'. Previously there seemed to be greater clarity in that all young people with a RON experienced the FNA meeting. Now, given the very broad definition of ASN, it seems, arguably, to

be up to professionals in different LAs to decide whose needs warrant a meeting and whose do not.

Figure 7 provides more detailed evidence of the apparent increase in the degree to which the meetings were seen as 'young person centred':

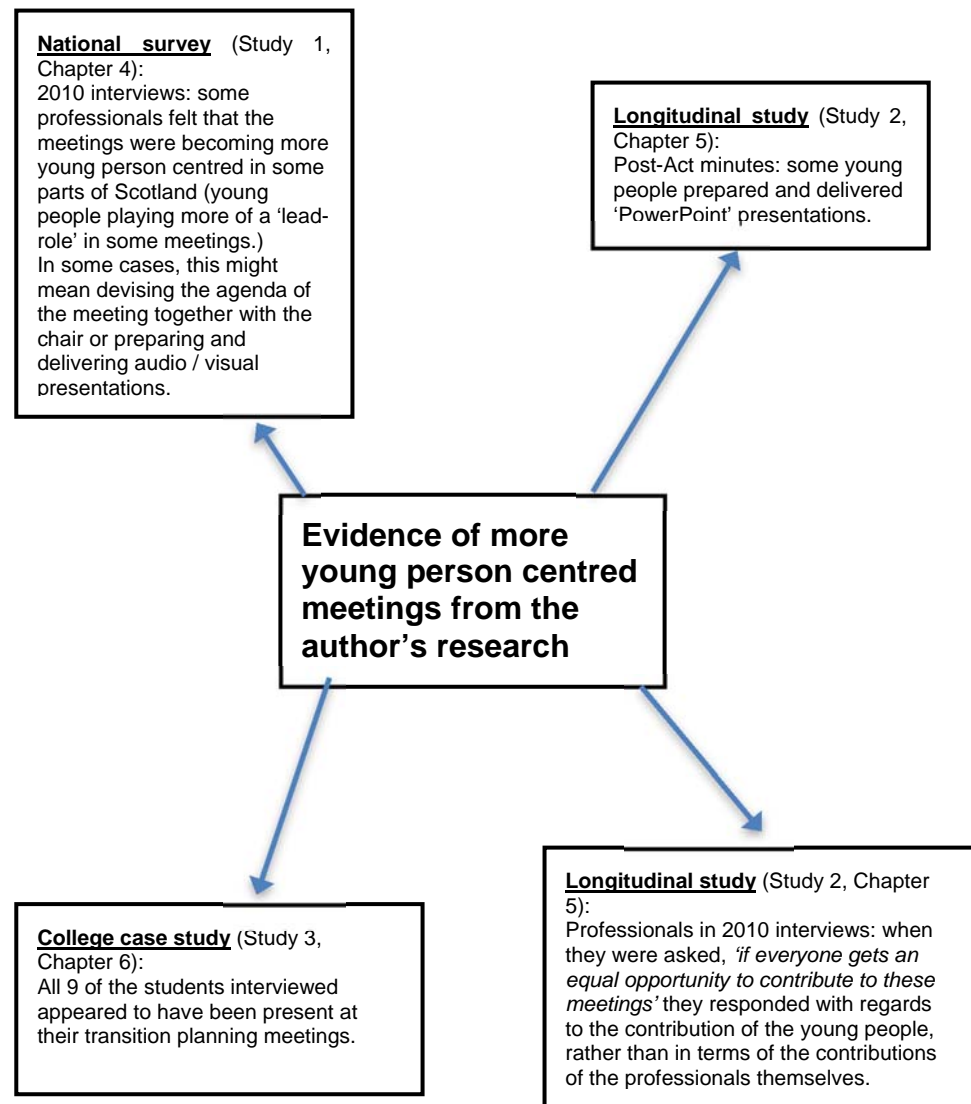


Figure 7: More young person centred meetings

Table 7.2 provides evidence of the perceived need for a 'link' or 'co-ordinating' person to help the young person through the transition process. Much research advocates a 'link' person to take on this role (cf Morris, 2002; Bellis, 2003; Mittler, 2007; Bangser, 2008).

Table 7.2: The need for a 'link' person

The 'link' person advocated in the author's research
<p>Longitudinal study (Study 2, Chapter 5):</p> <p>There was also a perceived need for 'co-ordination' of the transition support process amongst the professionals in the longitudinal study across both periods (2004 and 2010). There was a feeling that adult services ought to play a more prominent role in the meetings. It was suggested that, if a co-ordinator or key worker was available, he or she should belong to the Social Work profession, and that he or she should know the young person well.</p>
<p>College case study (Study 3, Chapter 6):</p> <p>The 9 students in the author's study seemed to have had support plus opportunities to express their views during the transition process. While the young people did not seem to have had dedicated 'link staff' to support them through their transitions, many of them mentioned Teachers and other adults who helped them during the transition process.</p>

Additionally, two points emerged from both the literature review and the author's data. One was the need for a 'feedback loop' (cf Bellis, 2003; Mittler, 2007; Bangser, 2008) to provide information from post-school settings to school-level professionals about the success or otherwise of the transition had gone. The second was the need for a transition protocol to define a timescale for the planning of the transition linked to actions by specified individuals. The planning of the transition should be personalised to the needs of the young person (Ward et al. 2003; Tarleton & Ward 2005; Dee, 2006; Mittler, 2007) and might require the development of their self-determination / self-advocacy skills (Trainor, 2005; Mittler, 2008).

Finally, to attempt to view the findings of the author's work from a young person's perspective, Table 7.3 links the findings to the experience of imaginary young people in both periods (2004 and 2010):

Table 7.3: The experience of imaginary young people in 2004 and 2010

Young person 'A' (2004) Evidence: minutes of pre-Act meetings	Young person 'B' (2010) Evidence: minutes of post-Act meetings
Young person 'A' wasn't at the meeting	Young person 'B' was at the meeting. If he hadn't been able to be there, he would have been represented by 'proxy' (someone would have made a presentation on his behalf, perhaps in the form of a video or PowerPoint)
Young person 'A's parent was at a big meeting about him; there were lots of professionals there	Young person 'B' and his family met with different professionals on a number of occasions at Young person 'B's home

In conclusion, the author believes that his study can provide clues about what effective collaboration should look like. Thus, it is possible to say that true equality of opportunity to be heard should be an integral part of collaboration. Those who plan or facilitate collaborative events like transitional planning meetings need to consider the means by which participants feel most

comfortable about communicating, as well as the most appropriate places and times to meet. This might mean that professionals defer to a young person with ASN, their family or their 'link person' to determine how and where to meet (or indeed whether to meet at all). The following sections conclude the author's thesis. In them, he will set out the recommendations that arise from his research. In addition, he will state the implications for policy, practice and future research. Finally, he will conclude his thesis by discussing the limitations of his research as well as reflecting upon the whole process of undertaking his research project.

7.1 Implications for policy and practice

It is highly likely that the outcomes of the author's study will be of interest to the Scottish Government. The findings could help to revise or amend legislation like the Act in the future. The author believes that this study provides a framework for future policy development and for the development of professional practice. For those who are concerned with transitions for children and young people with ASN, it invites policy makers and professionals to consider where and how transition planning takes place. For many young people and their parents, the school may well be an appropriate and natural place to meet and plan; for others it may not. The historical perspective offered

in the literature review in this study shows that collaborative meetings for children / young people with ASN have taken place in other settings than schools (e.g. medical settings). There is no reason why the majority of parents / carers should be uneasy about coming to a school to meet regarding their child's future. For most, this will be something they have done many times during their child's school-career. For many children / young people with ASN, presenting their views and aspirations for the future in a meeting with adults may feel equally natural. For some parents, however, and possibly for many young people with ASN, a 'meeting' in a school involving a number of adults, whether 'formal' or 'informal' may be neither appropriate nor desirable.

The meetings, according to this study, are almost invariably 'chaired' by senior education staff (mainly Head Teachers or Deputy Head Teachers). Thus, there is a feeling that, no matter how careful the schools are to take on board the wishes of the young people and their families, the meetings are happening on the school's terms, not the families'. The findings of the study can provide indicators for Scottish policy-makers, as well as elsewhere in the UK and around the world, in terms of how the experience of this transition for the young people concerned might be improved. In particular, the study strengthens the case for the transition process, including any 'meetings', whether

formal or informal, to continue to become more focussed upon the young people themselves (and their families). This might include the management of the process by the young people in a format and/or location of their choosing. There also seems to be evidence from the study that more direct feedback to children's services from adult providers about whether or not school-level collaboration leads to the right post-school outcomes for the young people might be useful.

The current setting for most post-school transition planning meetings (schools) is, in a sense, 'familiar ground' for many of the professionals whom the author contacted over the course of his research, as it is for most of the young people and parents also. Even those from the Health, Social Work and Careers Advice professions are used to being in the setting of a school. Earlier the author referred to Armstrong (cf 2003) and the 'power of buildings'. Reference was also made to Delamont (cf 2002) and the 'invisibility' of some central features of education. Here, the author believes, is an example of both. The school, in this case, is assumed to be the best place for these meetings, but it is not clear whose assumptions these are. Education professionals, like the author, and professionals from other agencies who work with children, strive to achieve a 'child-centred' service in line with GIRFEC (cf 2008) and other policy directives. However, in a truly 'child-centred' model, it is possible

that school to post-school planning should now evolve to become more focused upon their needs, even devised and managed by them and their families, in a place of their choosing (cf McConkey, 2002; Trainor, 2005). This might not be a school.

7.2 Recommendations

In short, to achieve more effective young person-centred transition planning in Scotland, development of the following areas seems to be necessary:

- Young people and their families should play a more prominent role in deciding how and where to meet to plan the young person's future
- A small number of trusted individuals (or even one) should be considered to manage transitional support provided by key agencies. These individuals might be members of the young person's family
- A feedback process to provide information to the professionals who work with the young person at the secondary school stage about the post-school destinations of the young people is essential. This needs to be provided by the post-school destinations of the young person like employment, further education, day care etc. to professionals who work with young people at secondary school stage
- A transition protocol coupled with meaningful person centred planning is required. This needs to be provided by the key agencies like Education, Social Work, Health and

Careers Scotland who will provide transitional support for the young person

- Professionals need to be aware of models of good collaborative practice. These need to be provided as part of the core training and ongoing professional development process of professionals in the agencies cited above. It might be, for example, that the young person, in this case, should decide upon the venue and the format of the collaboration – therefore the collaboration might take place in a neutral non-school venue using creative approaches to communication e.g. the use of visual images.
- Planning for the young person needs to be more ‘person centred’ in order to strengthen the voice of, in this case, young people with ASN (or those who speak for them) so that the professionals who work with them can help the young person to devise and implement their plans in order to give the young person more autonomy. The author’s ‘discussion poster’ (Figure 3.2 and Appendix 5) or other visual support could be used to support this process.

7.3 Implications for future research

The author believes that this study provides a springboard for future researchers and policy-makers to explore how professionals engage with young people and their families, at transition times, and at other times also. In particular, future research could focus upon how young people and their families see transition planning developing to become truly ‘young person centred’. This might include, as the author has suggested, placing the design and management of such research more fully in the hands of young people and their

families in order that it more fully reflects their wishes and perspectives.

The way that children and adults in Scotland and around the world communicate is changing rapidly. Future research could focus upon how young people with ASN communicate now, how they wish to communicate and how they might communicate in the future. The author's research has begun to suggest that young people with ASN, together with their families, could, and should, take control of their transition planning and preparation to a greater extent. In this project, the notion of the young people choosing the location for discussions about their future to take place (e.g. their homes) has arisen. In addition, examples have been provided of the young people determining the agendas for their meetings and playing lead roles. Finally, the increasing use of technology and resources like PowerPoint, video, 'talking mats' can offer a variety of ways for the young person to present his or her wishes regardless of the level of the young person's needs or if they are unable to be present at a meeting. Future research could also expand upon the use of visual and creative processes and resources to support children and young people with ASN. For example, for the researcher to 'listen on all channels' (cf Marchant et al. 1999) in a genuine sense, the students in the author's 'college case study' might have designed and implemented research on their own

transition themselves. The outcome of such a process might have been completely different to the rather limited data the author was able to gather from the students.

All of these developments could have implications for how transition planning might be conducted in the future. Further research could also focus specifically upon establishing how young people and their families see the transition process evolving, if indeed they feel it should do so. This might include exploring stakeholders' views of the use of alternative settings for planning transitions for young people, including those with ASN.

Another aspect of the author's study that could be expanded and developed in future research is the use of creative and innovative approaches to engage with young people when conducting research. His study champions the use of visual and creative processes and resources with children and young people, suggesting that innovative approaches need to evolve to help some young people to engage with transition planning and discussion. The author believes that visual approaches are particularly effective with children / young people with ASN, and that there are non-threatening, therapeutic qualities to creative activities of all kinds which can provide a vehicle to examine

potentially difficult topics, for example the transition from a familiar setting to an unfamiliar one.

7.4 Limitations

One limitation of this study is that the sample size was small. Although data were gathered from professionals from across rural and urban parts of Scotland, not every LA was represented. As stated in Chapter 4, 16 professionals in 10 out of the total of 32 Scottish LAs responded (National Survey, study 1, Chapter 4). In addition, mainly education professionals seem to have responded to this survey, whereas the author had hoped for a wider 'spread' of different professionals who were involved in transition planning and preparation. The data from the professionals in the Longitudinal Study were more detailed (Study 2, Chapter 5) and represent a sample of the professionals who would be involved in transition planning and preparation in one Scottish LA.

Likewise, although the voices of parents/carers and young people are represented, the sample of parents/carers and young people is small and limited geographically to one LA in Scotland. The main source of data from parents/carers and young people

was the 'college case study' interviews conducted in late 2012 (College Case Study, Study 3, Chapter 6). In this study, as stated in Chapter 6, the ASN manager selected the 9 young people (out of a total of 28 young people with ASN who were enrolled at the college at that time) and 4 parents. He based this choice on his knowledge of the young people and their parents / carers and thus the choice was outside the direct control of the author. Having said this, the author was in close discussion with the ASN manager as the process of negotiating access to the participants and arranging the interviews was taking place.

There are other limitations to this study. For example, the study concerns legislation specific to Scotland and it therefore makes no claim that the results of the study would be replicated elsewhere in the UK, or in other parts of the world. In addition, this study does not claim to capture every aspect of post-school transitions, even from a professional perspective. Also, although the minutes of meetings provided useful and interesting data, they were derived from only one school and so cannot claim to provide a representative sample of Scotland as a whole.

One final limitation is that the author attempted to make the interviews less formal with the aim of engaging the young people more by using the visual resource and an informal, less structured interview style as well as locating the student

interviews in a more neutral café environment in the college. However, despite this, the author recognises that the responses, and therefore the data, obtained from the students was not as full as it might have been. The scripts of the interviews with the young people (Appendix 15) illustrate the brevity of the interviews. Eliciting information verbally from the young people was not easy. Responses were very short and lacking in detail. Further 'probe' questions were used to try and draw out more detail but with limited success. It was difficult to elicit more than a 'minimal' response from them in the meeting, and the meeting was shorter and less detailed than the author had envisaged as a result. The author is aware that the data-gathering method used with the students: interviews combined with the 'discussion poster', may not have captured as much data as a more 'student-centred' method might have done. It might be, for example, that the short responses to the author's questions were influenced by the differences between the author and the students; in other words that there were barriers between the researcher and the participants from the beginning. Such possible difficulties might have been avoided if it had been possible for the students to have played more of a 'lead-role' in devising and conducting the research.

7.5 Reflections

A variety of methods were used to gather data in this study. Professionals, parents/carers and young people with ASN were interviewed. The approach used to carry out the interviews differed for each of the 3 groups. For example, it would have been very difficult to speak to all the professionals in the interviews (in both the 2004/05 and 2010 phases) face-to-face as they are scattered across quite a wide geographical area. In addition, the author has been working full-time as a Teacher throughout this project and it would not have been possible within these constraints to carry out such a large number of face-to-face interviews. Therefore, a telephone interview approach was used with these professionals. Telephone interviews were also used to interview the 4 parents / carers in the College case study. However, the 9 College students were all interviewed face-to-face. This allowed for a more informal approach than that used to interview the professionals, for example and, importantly, made it possible to use the visual 'discussion poster' resource with the students during the interviews.

The examples from the scripts of the interviews with some the students give a strong ‘flavour’ of how the interviews were conducted, and of the type of language used by the author and by the students. An example is the use of Scottish dialect by Student 5 (S5). At one point, S5 referred to the “...*work-experience quine...organiser of work experience...*”: ‘Quine’ is a ‘woman’ in a dialect of northern Scotland. S1 also used dialect quite extensively (e.g. “*I didnae want tae bide at school*”: “*I didn’t want to stay at school*”). Other examples include, “*a*” (“*all*”), “*bide*” (“*stay*”) and “*frae*” (“*from*”). In addition to reflecting the reality of how these particular students communicate, these quotes force researchers to reflect upon how to communicate effectively with young people. To an extent, there are also implications for how to communicate with the parents / carers also, who might use similar language and ways of speech. The author is not a ‘native’ of this part of Scotland and so the author would not use this dialect naturally. Therefore, in addition to the author’s professional background as a Teacher, the author might be perceived by the students as ‘not one of them’ from the beginning. This could certainly have implications for the degree to which the students felt able to ‘open up’ to the author in the interviews. The author has already referred to attempts at a ‘chatty’, ‘less formal’ approach to the interviews with the students and their families, and how this approach differed

markedly from the approach taken with the professionals in the earlier longitudinal study.

The 'Scotland-wide' phase of the research (i.e. the national online survey) tied up the loose ends of the study in that it offered a wider perspective on some aspects of the post-school transition process. The process of contacting LAs was very interesting as it gave the author an opportunity to discuss the research with a fairly wide 'audience'. Also, as discussed in the previous section, the online survey widened the research to encompass, potentially, the whole of Scotland, thus, hopefully, increasing its validity and its relevance to a wider audience and supporting the process of triangulating the study (Hussein, 2009).

The 'college interview' process was also interesting and fruitful, offering a chance to meet face-to-face some of the young people with ASN upon whom this study has been focussed over so many years. By meeting them, they became human beings and less as an abstract focus of study. Many of the young people with whom the author works in schools go on to college settings, and elsewhere, so it was very rewarding to hear first-hand accounts from these young people of their transition experiences. This feedback, plus the huge amount of learning

the author has undertaken throughout this study, can now directly contribute to the author's knowledge and skills base as a Teacher, given that the author is involved in the transition process in many ways in schools.

Over the course of this project, talking to different professionals and learning about their professional roles was an interesting and enlightening experience for the author. In addition, the author has developed a closer understanding of 'what happens' at transition times, which can be used to inform the author's professional development work as a Teacher and researcher in years to come. In addition, most of the professionals who were contacted as part of the 'online survey' expressed an interest in the research and wished to receive a summary of the finished research.

Finally, it is worth stating that the author was able to make a seminar presentation about his research at a national conference in Derby in July, 2013. This conference was attended by a wide array of professionals from different backgrounds from Educational Psychologists to Art and Drama Therapists. As stated the part of the author's study involved the use of visual support materials (the 'discussion poster' used in the college case study); the conference concerned the place of

the Arts in Applied Psychology and Education. Feedback from participants provided the author with useful information about how the presentation could be developed to use in other settings (the author's workplace, for example). The delegates preferred the more informal 'hands-on', creative elements of the seminar to the 'PowerPoint' presentation, for example. Also, the participants offered suggestions about how participatory research could be carried out with young people in the future. Suggestions included using a visual 'transition passport' to discuss the transition experiences of the young people, building up a relationship with the students at school-level before meeting them at college level and asking the students themselves to devise and record a 'transition story' of their own in a manner of their choosing. All of these suggestions will be taken on board by the author in relation to future research presentations and future research projects. In the author's case, new technology, informal settings and the visual 'discussion poster' were three elements in a potential new approach to engaging with young people, including those with ASN. As a continuation of his previous research-work, the author would also be keen to become involved in other educational research projects and to link these to the author's professional development as a Teacher.

As indicated earlier, a big challenge for the author over the course of this study was 'fitting it in' to his full-time role as a Teacher. This meant that contacting managers for permission to carry out interviews and organising times to interview the professionals themselves had to be shoehorned in around teaching duties in primary and secondary schools. The author hopes that the quality of this study has not been affected as a result and he recognises that many researchers undoubtedly study on a part-time basis in this way. For many years he has been regularly attempting to 'manage' large amounts of documentary material relating to the study.

It is also perhaps worth noting that particular ways of working or studying were developed by the author over the course of this research study. For instance, in addition to using colour-coding to code data during the analysis stages of the study, colour-coding was also used during the writing phase, adding typewritten comments from his tutors in one colour, and dividing the chapters up by colour also to help to find comments and chapters later more easily. Additionally, multiple back-up copies of the research were made, on data sticks and on different hard-drives. By doing this, as well as by dating each 'new' version of the study, the risk of accidentally deleting or losing a crucial part of the study was minimised.

7.6 Original contribution and new knowledge creation

The author's study is unique in that it spans the periods before and since the introduction of a key piece of Scottish legislation, the ASL Act, and examines the post-school transition from a wide variety of perspectives. A small number of studies exist in which the school to post-school transition in the UK, including Scotland, are examined in some detail (cf Kaehne and Beyer, 2008; 2009). However, there are few studies that focus upon this transition in a Scottish context, particularly from the perspective of professionals. The author's study focusses almost entirely upon Scotland and thus it adds to the body of research into transitions in relation to this country. The study reflects a great many changes in the Scottish education system, the phasing out, for example of the FNA system and its replacement with less formalised transition planning. Over the course of the study, old terms like 'FNA' and 'SEN' have been phased out and new terminology like 'ASN' has been introduced. Thus, amongst other things, the study provides an illustration of the rapid, and continuing, changes in the 'ASN picture' in Scotland and beyond. The author believes that no other study based in Scotland has examined the school to post-

school transition in such detail, encompassing the voices of professionals, parents/carers and the young people themselves.

The development of a creative and visual resource (the author's 'discussion poster') specifically to support transition planning for young people with ASN and to begin to capture their views and wishes in innovative and creative ways is another unique aspect of this study. The use of visual and other creative, less formal resources for use as research tools with children and young people is widely cited in research. Photographs and cartoons are examples of visual resources which can be used to 'listen on all channels' with young people (cf Marchant et al. 1999) and a range of other authors refer to the use of visual and creative resources with children and young people with ASN at transition times. Bilingual learners and young people with autistic spectrum disorders are two examples (cf Franson, 2002; Chuan & Flynn, 2006; Highland Council, 2009).

The increasing use of technology like PowerPoint is an example of the increasing empowerment of young people with ASN in Scotland to express themselves more fully. These developments pave the way towards more effectively engagement (cf Marchant et al. 1999) by adults with young people with ASN.

As stated, the author's study was limited in scale in some respects. Nonetheless, the author overcame these limitations to create a study which had a good 'range', encompassing the viewpoints of professionals across rural, urban and island communities of Scotland. The study examined both the national picture and the school to post-school transition in considerable detail in one Scottish LA, including the viewpoints of young people, their families and the professionals who work with them, thereby creating a body of work which can benefit future researchers, professionals and policy-makers.

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Appendix 1



School of Psychology

University of Dundee Research Ethics Committee

Thomas Richardson,
 School of Education, Social Work and Community Education,
 University of Dundee,
 Nethergate,
 Dundee,
 DD1 4HN.

7 September 2012

Dear Mr Richardson,

Application Number: UREC 11132

Title: Collaboration and Transitions (questionnaires to transition partnerships in local authorities).

Your application has been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Committee, and there are no ethical concerns with the proposed research. I am pleased to confirm that the above application has now been approved.

You submitted the following documents:

1. new UREC application aug 11
2. new UREC application aug 11 details
3. intro text to BOS survey
4. Consent Form online study
5. email text for LA contact
6. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Willatts'.

Peter
 Willatts

Digitally signed by Peter Willatts
 DN: cn=Peter Willatts, ou=University of
 Dundee, o=School of Psychology,
 email=p.willatts@dundee.ac.uk, c=GB
 Reason: I am the author of this
 document
 Date: 2012.09.07 15:58:09 +01'00'

Dr Peter Willatts
 Deputy Chair, University of Dundee Research Ethics Committee

UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE Dundee DD1 4HN Scotland UK t +44(0)1382 229993
 e psych@dundee.ac.uk www.dundee.ac.uk/psychology

Appendix 2



School of Psychology

University of Dundee Research Ethics Committee

Duncan Richardson,
 School of Education, Social Work and Community Education,
 University of Dundee,
 Nethergate,
 Dundee,
 DD1 4HN.

3 February 2011

Dear Mr Richardson,

Application Number: UREC 11005**Title: Professionals involved in postschool transitions meetings.**

Your application has been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Committee, and there are no ethical concerns with the proposed research. I am pleased to confirm that the above application has now been formally approved.

You submitted the following documents:

1. Study protocol
2. UREC Application Form

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Willatts'.

Peter
 Willatts

Digitally signed by Peter Willatts
 DN: cn=Peter Willatts, o=University
 of Dundee, ou=School of
 Psychology,
 email=p.willatts@dundee.ac.uk,
 c=GB
 Reason: I am the author of this
 document
 Date: 2011.02.03 15:00:15 Z

Dr Peter Willatts
 Chair, University of Dundee Research Ethics Committee

Appendix 3



School of Psychology

University of Dundee Research Ethics Committee

Thomas Richardson,
 School of Education, Social Work and Community Education,
 University of Dundee,
 Nethergate,
 Dundee,
 DD1 4HN.

7 September 2012

Dear Mr Richardson,

Application Number: UREC 11085

Title: Collaboration and Transitions (interviews with young people regarding
 transition experiences)

Your application has been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Committee, and there
 are no ethical concerns with the proposed research. I am pleased to confirm that the above
 application has now been approved.

You submitted the following documents:

1. Consent Form college interviews
2. new UREC application aug 11 no2
3. new UREC application aug 11 no2 details
4. Participant Information Sheet college interviews
5. discussion poster draft 2
6. discussion poster draft 2_1

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Willatts'.

Peter
 Willatts

Digitally signed by Peter Willatts
 DN: cn=Peter Willatts,
 ou=University of Dundee,
 ou=School of Psychology,
 email=p.willatts@dundee.ac.uk,
 c=GB
 Reason: I am the author of this
 document
 Date: 2012.09.07 16:31:50 +01'00'

Dr Peter Willatts
 Deputy Chair, University of Dundee Research Ethics Committee

UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE Dundee DD1 4HN Scotland UK t +44(0)1382 229993
 e psych@dundee.ac.uk www.dundee.ac.uk/psychology

Discussion poster for John Smith at _____ college

Date 1st October, 2011

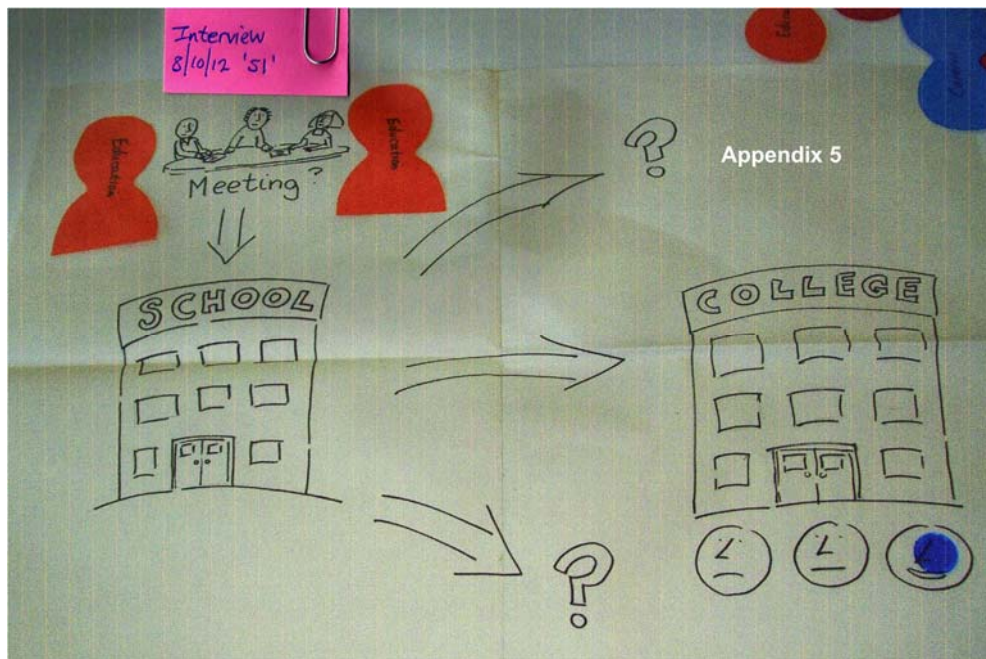
Appendix 4

The right place for you?
Comment? _____

Meeting at school? ☐ Yes ✓
☐ No ✓

What did you think of the meeting? X

Can you say more? _____



BOS questionnaire questions (National Survey)

1 State name of LA

2 State job title

3a How frequent are the meetings?

3b How do you prepare for meetings?

4 Where are meetings held?

5 Who attends the meetings?

6 Who chairs the meetings?

7 Are the meetings conducive to discussion?

8 Are the meetings effective at putting plans in place for the young person? (Give a reason for your answer)

9 Does everyone get an equal opportunity to contribute to the meetings? (if 'yes' please give a reason)

10 How is the young person involved in the meeting?

10a How are the young people helped to prepare for meetings?

10b If the young person is not involved, how are their views represented?

12 What makes the transition planning process a success?

13 What are the barriers to success transitions?

14 What changes to transition meetings have there been since the Act?

15 What support have you received with regards to the changes due to the Act?

Appendix 7

Date _____

Dear _____,

I am writing to you with regards to a research project. I am a Teacher from _____. As part of a doctoral study with the University of Dundee, I would like to gather information from professionals who are involved in transition planning and meetings for young people with additional support needs moving from school to post school settings. To do this I have devised an online survey. I am interested in the professional's views of the effectiveness of transition planning and meetings and how, if at all, they feel the process has changed since the Additional Support for Learning Act of 2004 became law.

Would it be possible for the link to my online survey to be passed to professionals who are members of 'transition partnerships' in the _____ Council area (in other words, professionals who are involved in transition planning and meetings for young people with additional support needs as they move from school to post-school settings)? Please ask the professionals to complete the survey to complete if they so wish. The survey is completed anonymously and it has been approved by the University of Dundee Research Ethics Committee. The interview responses will be destroyed after the research study is completed.

The survey takes around 15 minutes to complete.

The survey address is below.

Many thanks for your help.

Yours, Thomas Richardson

<http://www.survey.dundee.ac.uk/collabtrans>

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET*[Post school transitions]***INVITATION TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH STUDY**

You are asked to take part in a research study, looking at the experiences of post-school transition meetings and planning process by the professionals involved. It is part of my doctoral studies in Education at the University of Dundee.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

This study looks at the views of different professionals who are involved in the post-school transition meetings and planning process. All responses are treated anonymously. It is the views of individuals that are sought, rather than a corporate response from their employing organisation. Participation in this research may benefit young people with additional needs in terms of how transition meetings and planning may evolve in future.

TIME COMMITMENT

The study requires a few minutes of your time to answer questions in an online questionnaire.

COST, REIMBURSEMENT AND COMPENSATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary.

You will receive a summary of the research once the research project is completed.

RISKS

There are no known risks for you in this study.

TERMINATION OF PARTICIPATION

You can decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation and without penalty.

CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

The data collected do not contain any personal information about you.

No one will be able to link the data you provided to your identity and name.

The data will be seen only by me as a researcher and will not be made available to anyone else.

The interview responses will be destroyed after the research study is completed.

The University of Dundee may publish the results of the research but all information in the research will remain anonymous.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THIS RESEARCH STUDY

Thomas Richardson will be glad to answer any of your questions about this study at any time. You may contact him via e-mail at richardsonfamilyster@gmail.com or by phone on 01771 637016.

The University Research Ethics Committee of the University of Dundee has reviewed and approved this research study.

Appendix 9

constructive way to be part of these review meetings and that therefore the meeting needs to be considered slightly differently, the person who's going to be there, because at the moment it's very adult-led, very adult-focused, very adult language-wise..

Me

So, in what ways could the ways that meetings are conducted be improved?

CR

Well, I don't know, one of my colleagues in adult learning difficulties was telling me about a way that they run, that a group-home runs the reviews that they have for adults, and what they do is they make it very personalised around the person that's being discussed. I think that this person, whose review it is, takes the lead in a way, to think about where they're at and where they want to go. Now that's in an adult setting so perhaps that's not the same focuses because, well, by the very nature of being at school, you do not particularly set your learning targets the same. Therefore, you're not setting your objectives the same as you would as an adult in the community, but something that I did see being used very effectively was this tool called 'talking mats', which allows supported conversation around key issues, it's supported conversation around one topic, it's not a general communication-aid that's used all the time, it's certain occasions, and I think what you could do is you could use that tool quite well to begin to find out from the young person what they think about how they're getting on, what they like at school, for the ones who are having a taste of going to college, or going to the adult training centre, also what they think about those, what they like about those, and a feeling about some of their peers because I know there's been some people looking in schools with issues about which peers are going with them, whether someone's going to college or not, and I think, I just think you need to address slightly different issues at the future needs meeting that come from the person themselves, but I still think it's important to consider the adult-level side of the things too so that perhaps you would need to look in two stages.

Me

So, that, then, in terms of, you know, finding a more appropriate way for the young person to express their views about the process - that would be one of the sort of positive aspects that make the transition process better. Are there any other things which you think help to make this difficult period in a young person's life work a bit better?

CR

I think possibly just relating back to what I'd already said about services being able to joint-work. Sometimes I feel that if my service could work with the adult service at an earlier stage it would be much better in working out what could be the difficulties to try and pre-empt some of those before they happen.

Me

Ok, that's great, and what about the other side of that, then? What are some of the things that, eh, prevent it working really?

For those attending transitional support meetings for young people with additional support needs who are about to leave school:

7/9 3-30

Appendix 10

Please state your job title, or the name of the service to which you belong:

SLW ch. with disabilities for ch. with dis. Team

North branch of team - whole area.

How do you view continuity of support for young people with additional support needs

by your service at the school to post school stage? has improved closer relat.

between us & ed. & career, college & health - keep in contact

SLW quarterly meet. looking at transition YP (staying up to term in adult services) & we attend school reviews for YP known to our team (career, college usually) learn

Please comment on how effective you feel a transitional support meeting is in

terms of setting plans for the future provision for the young person in motion?

incorporates a School review
may be a different meeting before
any review
Y. in terms of looking at what likely to be needed, no lack of goodwill
but may not happen if not statutory even if on admin plan.
may be a different meeting before any review

Do you feel everyone gets an equal opportunity to contribute to these meetings?

responsible for doing what
(it unrealistic expectation of what SLW can provide
yes, they do & feel at ease, but some do feel a bit daunted & fearful (a child) can be better
eg text to college
(may be argued as a child)

In your opinion, what helps to make the process of transition to adult services for a young person with additional support needs a success?

regio of collective responsibility (ie not just school or SLW)
- good post school plan - trans. process starting soon enough from SLW (age 14/15 onwards)
+ identify an adult worker
good collaborative relationship between ch. & adult worker
eg one meeting at home or Widdowson programme

In your opinion, what prevents successful transitions to adult services for a young person with additional support needs?

uncertainty about which serv. provides identified need
but a recognition of
poor contact between
the need may fall between 2 stools
meeting with other points
all circulated

The options considered were:

- [REDACTED] could continue to follow the Link course at [REDACTED] College for another year whilst at [REDACTED].
- Courses at the local colleges – [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] – where [REDACTED] could progress from the Access courses. He could try out vocational areas that might be of interest to him and gain experience of supported work experience.
- Community placements
- Full-time placement at [REDACTED] College

At about 17 or 18 years of age responsibility for [REDACTED] work and educational experience, along with decisions about accommodation for [REDACTED] would become the responsibility of Care Management, jointly with [REDACTED] parents. Options suggested were:

- Resource Centre – possibly [REDACTED]
- Supported Employment
- Social work projects

Appendix 11

Information was given about the benefits available to [REDACTED] when he becomes 16 years old.

Social Work

It was stated that an assessment of [REDACTED] needs was underway. [REDACTED] long-term housing needs would be explored with the options of supported accommodation (possibly [REDACTED]) and respite support for the family being considered in conjunction with [REDACTED] parents' views. The transition from home to supported accommodation would be phased to allow [REDACTED] to gradually become more independent in staying away from home.

It was acknowledged that [REDACTED] finds change particularly hard to manage and the coming two years in school would allow [REDACTED] to become more accustomed to the possibility of a different place of work and residence. It would have to be managed at [REDACTED] pace.

Parents

Mrs [REDACTED] would like to see [REDACTED] in a supervised work experience placement and would like him to be able to live independently, by about his 20s. She felt that [REDACTED] is quite isolated at his current address.

Future Action

- [REDACTED] will continue with [REDACTED] Academy and attaining a variety of modules in [REDACTED] school.
- [REDACTED] will have a careers interview shortly.
- Continued phased planning for further education and/or work placement to take place over the next two years.
- Social Work will carry out an assessment of [REDACTED] needs.

The family have requested that social work look into Supported Living options for [REDACTED] and his name is to be added to the social work list. The issue of residential respite was discussed and Ms. [REDACTED] said she would explore this further for [REDACTED]'s benefit. He is very aware that other pupils in his class go for respite.

Mrs. [REDACTED] said that she couldn't get [REDACTED] to go to [REDACTED] or any summer playschemes.

Appendix 12

Next Steps

After summer [REDACTED] will be in Secondary 5. Mrs. [REDACTED] doesn't envisage [REDACTED] leaving school before age 18. If there is an appropriate group and course, [REDACTED] will attend [REDACTED] College one day a week and will work on a leavers programme which will extend his independent living skills.

Mrs. [REDACTED] asked if we could investigate a Residential Farm Course in [REDACTED] as a possible option for [REDACTED] for post school years.

The group completed the [REDACTED]'s School Assessment Tool for the Coordinated Support Plan (CSP).

As no other agencies are directly involved in [REDACTED]'s education there will be no CSP completed.

Appendix 13

1. 'Viewpoint' software: In a report by Glasgow City Council Child Protection Team, '*Listening to Children*', 'Viewpoint' software is described in terms of their child protection process for children aged 5 and over. The team describe the Viewpoint system as an interactive web-based application incorporating audio computer assisted interviewing in a software package that allows children to listen to, or read questions and respond immediately on screen. The responses of the children are encrypted and sent to a secure server managed by the Viewpoint organisation. Data is available for analysis with Viewpoint software, or other statistical packages, for authorised personnel, and reports can be prepared based upon the captured data.

(Source: Glasgow City Council Social Work Services. (2011). *Listening to Children: The use of Viewpoint in the child protection process*.
(www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=9685&p=0)

2. 'My World Triangle': The 'My World Triangle' is part of the 'Getting It Right For Every Child' (GIRFEC) resource produced by the Scottish Government. GIRFEC is in use widely amongst Scottish local authorities and the 'Triangle' is a graphical resource that helps children and young people to consider three key aspects of their lives: '*How I grow and develop*', '*My Wider World*' and '*What I need from people who look after me.*'

(Source: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/national-practice-model/my-world-triangle>)

Appendix 14

_____ 2004

Dear _____,

I am an _____ council Teacher, currently on secondment as a Strategic Development Officer. I am also undertaking research as a postgraduate research student at the University of _____. One aspect of my current post concerns the transition for young people with additional support needs from children's to adult services. My research project is also concerned with this area, with a focus upon 'future needs assessment meetings' in schools.

To assist in the data gathering for the project, therefore, I wonder if, as a professional who attends these meetings, you would help me by responding to the attached interview questions, which concern future needs assessment meetings. I would like to complete these questions with you over the telephone by RECORDING your answers using a telephone recording device. Once I have received your reply slip, if you wish to participate, I will telephone you to arrange a suitable time to carry out the telephone interview.

It is my intention to carry out this interview process with the majority of the professionals (plus some of the young people, or their parents / carers) who would be involved in future needs assessment meetings at the _____ schools for children with additional support needs in _____.

It is my hope that the analysis of the data from these interviews will help to shape the school to post school planning system for young people with additional support needs in this authority in future, as it evolves in the light of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act 2004. Your views, therefore, will form an important contribution to this process. In the research project neither you nor the school at which you attend future needs assessment meetings will be identified by name. Only the name of the service to which you belong will be cited. Although the research may be published after the study is complete, the data will be destroyed.

Finally, I would like to know whether I need to seek permission to carry out this research from your service manager (or equivalent), or whether your personal consent is sufficient.

Please indicate whether you are willing to participate in this study, whether consents are required, and an indication of convenient times to telephone you, on the attached reply slip, and return it to me by Friday 30th July.

Yours Sincerely,

Tom Richardson

.....
.....

Reply slip

Please state your name and service:

Are you willing to participate in this study? Yes No

Is permission to participate required from your Service Manager (or equivalent)?

Yes No

If yes, please indicate name and contact phone number of Service Manager (or equivalent):

Please indicate convenient days of the week / times for me to telephone you:

Appendix 15

For those attending transitional support meetings for young people with additional support needs who are about to leave school:

Please state your job title, or the name of the service to which you belong:

How do you view continuity of support for young people with additional support needs by your service at the school to post school stage?

Please comment on how effective you feel a transitional support meeting is in terms of setting plans for the future provision for the young person in motion?

Do you feel everyone gets an equal opportunity to contribute to these meetings?

In your opinion, what helps to make the process of transition to adult services for a young person with additional support needs a success?

In your opinion, what prevents successful transitions to adult services for a young person with additional support needs?

Appendix 16

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

[Post school transitions]

INVITATION TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH STUDY

You are asked to take part in a research study, looking at the perceived effectiveness of post-school transition meetings. It is part of my doctoral studies in Education at the University of Dundee.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

This study looks at the views of different professionals who are involved in these meetings. All responses are treated anonymously. It is the views of individuals that are sought, rather than a corporate response from their employing organisation.

Participation in this research will benefit young people with additional needs in terms of how transition meetings may evolve in future.

TIME COMMITMENT

The study required a few minutes of your time to answer questions over the phone.

COST, REIMBURSEMENT AND COMPENSATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary.

You will receive a summary of the research once the research study is completed.

RISKS

There are no known risks for you in this study.

TERMINATION OF PARTICIPATION

You can decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation and without penalty.

CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

The data collected will not contain any personal information about you.

No one will be able to link the data you provide to your identity and name.

The data will be seen only by me as a researcher and will not be made available to anyone else.

The interview responses will be destroyed after the research study is completed.

The University of Dundee may publish the results of the research but all information in the research will remain anonymous.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THIS RESEARCH STUDY

Thomas Richardson will be glad to answer any of your questions about this study at any time. You may contact him via e-mail at

richardsonfamilyster@gmail.com or by phone on 01771 637016.

The University Research Ethics Committee of the University of Dundee has reviewed and approved this research study.

Appendix 17

CONSENT FORM

Collaboration and transitions

As part of a study with the University of Dundee, I would like to talk to you about the move from school to college and about any meetings you might have had before you left school. I'd like to video the talk and use some pictures to make it easier.

By signing below you are indicating that you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet and that you agree to take part in this research study.

Participant's signature

Date

Participant's name

Signature of person obtaining consent

Date

Name of person obtaining consent

"I agree to the use of anonymous extracts from my interview in conference papers and academic publications"

☒

YES

☐

NO

"I agree to the video recording of the interview"

☒

YES

☐

NO

Appendix 18**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET***[Moving from school to college]***INVITATION TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH STUDY**

I would like you to help me with my studies at the University of Dundee.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

I would like to find out what it was like when you left school and started college.

By taking part in this study, you might help make it easier for other young people to move on from school in the future.

TIME COMMITMENT

I would like you to give up a few minutes of your time to answer a few questions.

COST, REIMBURSEMENT AND COMPENSATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary.

RISKS

There are no known risks for you in this study.

TERMINATION OF PARTICIPATION

You can decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time you like.

CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

The information I will collect will not contain any personal information about you.

No one will be able to link the information you provide to your identity and name.

The data will be seen only by me as a researcher and will not be made available to anyone else.

The interview responses will be destroyed after the study is completed.

The University of Dundee may publish the results of the research.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THIS RESEARCH STUDY

Thomas Richardson will be glad to answer any of your questions about this study at any time. You may contact him via e-mail at

richardsonfamilyster@gmail.com or by phone on 01771 637016.

The University Research Ethics Committee of the University of Dundee has reviewed and approved this research study.

Appendix 19

College interview script (8.10.12) Students 1 & 2

[Location: café in ____ college, Scotland - ASN manager introduces S1 and S2 to the author, the manager leaves, the author sets up camera and poster, and switches on ipad, ready to begin the interview]

Author: 'So what it is...obviously you're now at college...you were at school before the summer...____ Academy, yeah?

S1 & S2: 'Yeah'

Author: 'So this is just talking about how you got from ...school to college...so can we start with you (S1)...is that OK?'

S1 & S2: 'Yeah'

Author: 'So, did you stay till 5th year?'

S1 & S2: '4th year.'

Author: 'So you [name: S1] stayed to 4th year...? What kind of stuff happened just as you were coming to the end of school? Did you have...did people get together a bit to talk about what you were going to do after school? Can you remember?'

S1: 'No...'

Author: 'Can't remember? How did you decide to go to college, then?'

S1 & S2: 'Mr and Mrs _____.'

Author: 'So, who are Mrs and Mrs _____?'

S2: 'Mrs _____ is the head of C2 Support.'

Author: 'At school?'

S1 & S2: 'At school, at the base...'

Author: 'So, two Teachers at school...?'

[S1 nods]

Author: 'So, that's the two Teachers in the school [the author places pictures on the discussion poster] just to remind me, sort of thing...they sort of helped you, [S1], is that right?'

[S1 nods]

Author: 'Well, I'll tell you what, I'll put your name on here...so there's [S1] [the author writes S1's name on the poster]...so, you got together with Mr and Mrs _____, is that right?'

S1: [nods] 'Mmm'

Author: 'And did you sit around a table like we're doing now? Is that right?'

S1: 'Yeah'

Author: 'Once or...?'

S1: 'A couple of times...'

Author: 'Like having a chat about what you wanted to do and so on?'

S1: 'Yeah' [nods]

Author: 'Did you have some other ideas about what you wanted to do or was it just College?'

S1: 'I didnae hae a clue...I didnae want tae bide at school...'

Author: 'You didn't want to stay at school?'

S1: 'Boring...!'

Author: 'Do you think that you're now in the right place? You're doing the...'preparation for work' course...?'

S1: 'Towards Employment...'

Author: 'Oh, right, sorry, you're doing the 'Towards Employment' course. Do you feel it's a good course?'

[S1 nods]

Author: 'So...if I give you...do you like that one? [the author gives S1 a blue counter to place on the poster] do you want to put that on? Whichever face would suit...[S1 places the counter on a 'face' on the poster]...Ah, excellent, so you feel that this is the right course for you?'

[S1 nods] 'Mmm'

Author: 'Have you got any thoughts about what you might want to do after college?'

S1: 'No...'

Author: 'No? Ok. Ok. Well, listen, that's super. Look, I'll tell you what...what I'll do is...I'll take a picture of this one for [S1] and then we'll talk about you [S2], is that OK?'

[S2 nods]

Author: 'Thank you...'cos if I don't do it now I'll just forget [I take picture of poster]...done!'

Author: 'So, thank you very much [S1]. I'll take off this one and these ones...[I clear poster] and now it's [S2's] turn...so, did you also stay on till 4th year?'

S2: 'Yeah.'

Author: 'Did people talk to you at school about...?'

S2: 'Yeah'

Author: 'So, the same people...Mr and Mrs _____, yeah? There wasn't anybody from college?'

S2: 'Well, [ASN manager] came...'

Author: 'Oh, OK'

S2: 'He came down a couple of times to talk to the class...'

Author: 'So, spoke to the class, OK, yeah that's really good, he was there some of the times...and did you know then that you wanted to go to college?'

S2: 'I liked the idea of going to college...'

Author: 'Yeah...and did they...was it sitting round a table as we are doing..?'

S2: 'We talked about the courses and how we'd get support if we went to college...'

Author: 'OK'

S2: '...trying to encourage us to go to college...'

Author: 'Did you have any other ideas?'

S2: 'Emm...no, just college...'

Author: 'And are you on the same course?'

S2: [nods] 'Yeah'

Author: 'So...now you're here I'll give you a different counter [the author gives S2 a different coloured counter] where would you put that one? [S2 places counter on a

'face' as before]...excellent, that's really good...happy with them, is there anything that either of you would have done differently?'

S1 & S2: [Both shake their heads] 'No'

Author: 'Sounds like you're both happy where you are?'

[Both nod]

Author: 'Well, what I'll do, I'll take a picture so I don't forget, OK?'

[Both nod] [the author takes a photo as before]

Author: 'That's really it, so I'll stop this video now...' [the author switches off ipad]

[Further chat with S1 and S2 to thank them for taking part and to say goodbye]